

INSIDE

Your quality Australian weekly soccer paper for the new millennium

SOCCER

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GLORY FANS UPROAR: BRING BACK BERND



"I don't know why they have done this," says Stange

Perth Glory fans are up in arms over the 'sacking' of popular German coach Bernd Stange. The club decided not to offer the former East German national team boss another contract after the end of this season, a decision which has prompted a wave of protests in Perth which will culminate in a demonstration outside Perth Oval before this weekend's clash with Canberra Cosmos.

Glory fans - who have been ringing Inside Soccer all week with their views on the matter - have insisted that once the demonstration is over, they will move peacefully into the ground to support their side.

A spokesman for Glory supporters said the players and the team was their prime concern: "We want to make our feelings known to Nick Tana. Then we want to go into the ground and give 100% support to our side for this game, and the rest of the season, in the quest to win our first ever grand final," said Rick Cornwall on Heritage FM in Perth.

The Perth Glory board actually voted to offer Stange a new contract, but in accordance with procedures Nick Tana, the major shareholder in the club, called another meeting to vote on the issue.

The result?

The board's decision was overturned. Tana was unrepentant when speaking yesterday, saying the club "had to look to the future." He added that Stange was one of the most "personable coaches he had ever met."

Stange himself was at a loss to explain the decision, although he was keen to blast media reports of player discontentment with his coaching.

"They (the media) don't understand. It is absolutely bullshit and wrong to say that. All my life I have problems with players and all the time I put pressure on the players. I am a coach, I will not be a friend to the players and results are the most important thing. That's why I follow my way," he said.

"It (his future) has been decided and that's it. I don't know the reason. I will try to win the premiership now. I

thought maybe I would have more time to win it but that is the way it is.

"I have no more comments," said Stange, "because I am a professional coach and I must not show any emotion. We have 13 more grand finals to play in the league and I must concentrate on this. I will give my best.

"I believe I have done a lot for WA Soccer. We have entertained and also found some great young players, but I can't show any emotion.

"It is a young club, and it's without youth and reserve teams. Two years is not a long time but we did not struggle like Parramatta and Northern Spirit. When I arrived we only won four home games.

"There is big competition for coaches worldwide in the big leagues, but I should find a job. Yes I would like to stay in Australia though ... my family is settled here.

"The fans want that I stay."

Stange yesterday received 400 E-mails of support, while his wife could not go to the shops without fans stopping her to wish her well and lend support to her husband.

"I have never in my life had that kind of reaction from fans. I believe the fans are the VIPs in Soccer. Sometimes they are more important than the ones in the grandstand with the suit and tie," added Stange.

"I have never heard of any offers from other Australian clubs. There are only rumours. It is a terrible thing because Eddie Krncevic is doing a good job and there are rumours about me coaching Marconi."

If Stange does indeed coach elsewhere (and despite what he says German sources say Marconi has offered him the job), then German international Ulf Kirsten will definitely not come to Perth. "I spoke to Ulf this week and he will maybe sign again for Bayer Leverkusen or, if he is not feeling too confident after Euro 2000, he may go the USA. If I am not here then he won't come. He won't have a reason to come," concluded the German coach.

The question now is, will Tana bow to public pressure and reverse his unpopular decision? This weekend's game will have more riding on it than just three points.

PFA/Spirit dispute:
We look at the politics of the issue.
Paul Trimboli:
A record 339 games this weekend.



Crooky

Last Friday night at North Sydney Oval was just like last year. More than 10,000 people and a real buzz around the ground as Nicola Berti made his debut and there was a real sense of expectation. Plus we won the game 1-0 over the Brisbane Strikers.

Although the talk was about the debut of our newest player it was our most capped player that proved to be the difference.

Paul Bilokapic ghosted into the penalty area and pounced on a loose ball inside the six-yard box to give Northern Spirit a much needed victory over the Brisbane Strikers.

Billy was superb in defence in what was a new system for us. With Matthew Bingley suspended and Robbie Enes refusing to play we decided to play with a flat back four and it worked a treat.

Billy and Michael Cunico played together as stoppers and did a tremendous job keeping Brisbane's attack in check. They only had a couple of chances and our defence was tight for most of the night.

Paul Wearne and Phil Moss played as the fullbacks and they also did a good job keeping their men in check.

I spoke at length about it with Arnie after the match and I think we are going to stick with the system.

The other positive for us was the performance of Paul Henderson in goals.

Hendo spent the best part of four



months in youth league but was reinstated into the line up before the Brisbane match.

He pulled off one great save from a Peter Grierson header and was solid throughout the match.

Hendo also suits the flat back four system as he is very quick and can get off his line quickly if we are breached.

Thankfully that didn't happen on Friday night and hopefully it won't happen when we travel to Belmore on Sunday to take on Sydney Olympic.

The match against Sydney Olympic, and the two following home matches against Wollongong (March 3) and Marconi (March 10) will decide whether or not we can force our way into the Top Six.

I think we need to get seven points from those games to set us up for the run home to the playoffs.

Ian Crook,
Northern Spirit and England

S-news

Inside Soccer's
Australian news
and goss

D-DAY FOR CLUBS

As reported last week on IS's front page, the NSL executive has made representations to the Soccer Australia board regarding the proposed changes to next year's NSL: the clubs wanted a moratorium to give them more time. Expect a decision by the end of this week on this critical Australian soccer issue. Tony Labbozzetta, on behalf of the clubs, gave little away, only saying that he was "hopeful of a fair hearing" and that dialogue was continuing. We will watch this one very closely.

THE MUSICAL KINGZ

We've all heard about the different ways coaches get their sides motivated. The psychological approach to the rant and rave. The Kingz however have a slightly different approach ... it appears to involve a combination of classical music and Al Capone! Shane Rufer's request that his players all pretend they were violin players left many wondering what the hell he was about to ask of his team. The classic punchline came when he asked the team to open their violin cases, pull out their submachine guns, and mow their opponents down! We know this because a NZ TV crew did a doco on the Kingz' trip to South.

MEDIA OFFICER/STRIKER

Not content with scoring goals on the park, Wolves' recent signing Stuart Young is now helping the club out in the role of part-time media officer. The urbane Young said to S-news it was an ideal complement to his training duties. "We train at nights and so I was available. The club suggested I help out and I jumped at the offer." For the Wolves their support numbers are growing, particularly as there is a feeling on the south coast that this is a stronger side that reached the finals two years ago.

THE TWO SCOTTS

At Sydney Olympic, Scott Baillie and Scott Thomas, are best of mates. The Newcastle boys are also one of the reasons why Olympic is doing so well - they are fierce competitors training full-time with the club. So it was somewhat ironical that after a lunch with their mega-rich club owners last Friday, the two lads were seen pushing their car down Parramatta Rd Ashfield after running out of petrol! "It was looking a bit empty then suddenly we stopped!" said Scott T. But as he was doing an interview with IS, it was left up to Scott B to do the pushing to the nearest Ampol. Lucky they're mates. (See Scott Thomas interview in this issue.)

SYDNEY UNITED VERSUS SHANGHAI SHEN HU

Sydney Utd hosts the mighty Chinese Premiers Shanghai Shen Hua on Feb 24 (Thursday). It kicks-off at 7pm and entry is \$10 for grown-ups and \$5 for kids/pensioners. More details call the Sydney Utd HQ on 9823 6418. You may remember United visited China for a pre-season tournament and played Shanghai. Should be worth a look.

YOU WANNA FILA!

Seems that Con Boutsianis' er ... Scheeky episode recently involving baring part of his buttocks to reveal his personal sponsors Fila on his underdax did not go down too well with Glory management. A fine was talked about and Boutsie was given a stern talking to. The only people happy were Fila, who were reportedly delighted with the publicity. As they say, any publicity is good publicity.

A BAILOUT?

Will John Howard also be bailing out the sacked workers at Northern Spirit?? We're joking!

CANTONESE KRES?

S-news spies in China tell us that former Spirit midfield inspiration Kresimir Marusic is in China looking for a club. Word has it his family was not too happy living in Belgium. Marusic's club Lommel was bottom of the ladder at last look.

TOLIOS SIGNS FOR GREEKS

Two more products of Carlton's youth system were recently snapped up by European clubs. Left winger Nello Noto has moved to Italy's Torino Calcio SPA, while defender Nick Tolios has signed with Greece's Ethnikos Asteras. Both players spent over two years with Carlton and won junior league titles with the club. While the outstanding work by Academy coach Jeff Olver and his staff continues to be ignored by Australia's junior selectors, the same isn't the case overseas. Reports suggest the Greek FA is lining up Tolios for their U21 international squad (as reported some time ago by S-news). If the former Carlton Academy skipper is capped by Greece, then he would be following another former Blues youngster - Pece Siveski - who is now a regular in Macedonia's U21 set-up. With the latest wave of Blues youngsters showing great promise, this situation is likely to continue until national selectors begin scouting further south than Sydney's Fairfield, notes the club's website. Good point.

LET'S DO A POWER LUNCH?

Power players will be out and about as usual. This Wednesday (23/2) Mark Bynes and Mile Sterjovski will be at the Samuel Gilbert PS Coaching Clinic between 10.40am and 12.40pm. This Thursday have lunch with Power players in Church Street Mall in Parramatta between 12.30-1.30pm and on Saturday Joe Vrkic and Joel Griffiths will be at Harvey Norman Wiley Park with the 2DAY FM Black Thunders.

NO WE'RE NOT INSOLVENT

Wallace Dann, Prez of the QSF rebutted claims that the Federation is insolvent. He was responding to comments made by Brian Wood in the Courier Mail last week. "These matters will be dealt with within the proper forums of the sport at an appropriate time," Dann said.

BRING BACK THE DON!

Ad City had a curtain raiser to the Glory Agame: Barilla/D'Oro Distributors vs Coles, refereed by Donald Campbell, but during the main game the fans were shouting 'Bring back Campbell!' They know the score down there.

MCMANUS' 100 GAMES

What a great way for Todd McManus to celebrate his 100th Breakers and NSL appearance, by beating Kingz in NZ and going second in the league. McManus is an inspiration having come up through the local junior and senior competitions. Well done Todd!

BILL TURNER CUP STARTING SOON

Concerns over the protracted con-tretemps between the NSW Ed dept and the NSW Teachers led to a number of schools not being entered in a variety of sports, including soccer with the Bill Turner Cup. After the dispute was resolved the Bill Turner Cup has decided to allow the late entries into the Cup. "Despite all the difficulties, there is a quiet confidence that this year will match the 1999 series," said a spokesperson.

CONDOLENCES

Our thoughts are with Blacktown City's Damon Langan and his family, who sadly lost his father on the morning of the game against Macarthur Rams last weekend.

INSIDE SOCCER

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Finals 2000 will have a fresh look about it

By Greg Blake

At least Northern Spirit's caretaker coach, Ian Crook, had the good grace and sense of perspective to publicly admit his team's season was over.

"That's it for us," Crook conceded after an admittedly weakened Spirit side had been crushed 4-1 by bubbling Newcastle in round 21. "You can say it's negative, but at the end of the day we are ten points behind and there are sides that have games in hand on us.

"I don't want to sit here and tell you a load of bullshit and say we're still in it - we're not."

No such concessions from South Melbourne or Adelaide Force, yet they too stumbled on the same weekend and only the most passionate or feeble-minded fans of those two clubs will argue that there is still a flicker at the end of the tunnel.

Round 21, 1999/2000, might not have completed the puzzle, but it was as pivotal as any in deciding that the new millennium has hastened a changing of the guard in the NSL.

The championship race is down to just nine clubs; Spirit, South Melbourne and the South Australians aren't on the grid.

Spirit are dousing spotfires everywhere at the moment, but a dose of humility will probably do the the world of goodfor

the wonder expansion club of the 1990s.

As I always suspected, a lack of devotion to recruiting and an understandable preoccupation with the World Club Championship cost South Melbourne dearly.

Sheer will - and genuine ability - kept them in the race for much of the campaign, but the end came compliments of an ever-improving Kingz and ten minutes of pandemonium at Bob Jane Stadium.

Not long after having what appeared to be the equalizer disallowed in a 2-1

NSL season and, ultimately, their campaign having been decided by some line-ball officiating - although that has been synonymous with the whole summer schedule.

A goal down at Parramatta Stadium, Claudio Pelosi's header to tie the game up was disallowed for a disputed offside call and that, without either a whimper or a bang, was the end of a decade-long run in finals football for Zoran Matic's team.

Adelaide Force simply doesn't have a plan B.

The regimented tradition of Matic football works well when defending a lead - or a place in the top six, for that matter - but coming from behind isn't a strong point

Let's put this in real terms.

For South Melbourne, Spirit or Force to break into the group of seven clubs which have dominated the top half of the ladder for the past 15 weeks - since South Melbourne dropped off the pace in November - they'd reasonably have to win three games to every one of at least four clubs above them.

None of the trio has managed more than two consecutive victories all season.

It's 'Roy of the Rovers' fantasy to consider the trio in 1999/2000, end of story.

Of the top nine still in the running, dismiss Parramatta Power and the Kingz.

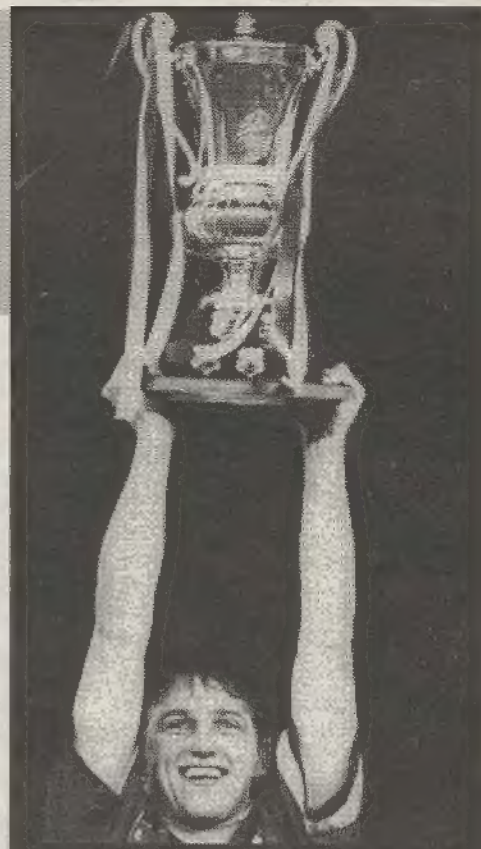
Ignore history at your peril and the NSL has never been won by a club into the

'As far as South Melbourne is concerned the party's over.'

game, South Melbourne saw the ball swept downfield to Kingz skipper Harry Ngata, whose impressive impressions of both off-side and handball were ignored, and the former Brunswick Juventus player pulled the shroud over the carcass of the champs of the past two seasons with a goal that silenced the stadium.

As far as South Melbourne is concerned the party's over.

Deliciously ironic that on the same weekend Adelaide Force, the other club to have so dominated the last decade, also had their season ended by a club in its first



Paul Trimboli holds up the trophy. This year expect a host of newcomers to fight out the 2000 finals series.

competition first time around.

Granted, Power is Mitchell's Sydney United grand final team of a season ago in just about everything but name.

And the Kingz are actually a hugely underrated talent, but, games in hand and all, every week is a mini final for both of them and you don't want to play a huge slab of the regular season with your ass on the line - as Wollongong did a couple of season's back - and end up with an empty tank for the big games in May and June.

Continued on page seven.

Fly the Flag

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✓ Brisbane Strikers

Friday 25 February

at the 'Powerhouse' (Parramatta Stadium)

Youth League 5.30pm

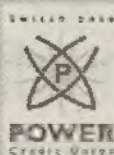
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Tuesday 22 February, 2000

Page 3



GREG BLAKE C7 SOCCER COMMENTATOR

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Good news deserves to lead this column. That it comes on a wave of common sense shown by Soc Aus still has me reeling in joyful disbelief.

But it seems the dramatic league revamp based on a plan that doesn't really exist - at least not yet - will be put on hold for twelve months while a genuine working blueprint of the new competition is drawn up.

It's not certain yet, but with all NSL clubs due to meet this Friday and the league executive expected to go to the AGM the next day with a unified agenda of compromise, the likelihood is that we'll get 12 months to nut the whole thing out.

I won't sully the mood of common sense shown by all of late, but would suggest that should the changes be put off for 12 months that we actually do spend the time wisely, not sitting on our collective hands.

My word, there is no place like Aussie soccer for petty vendettas, knockers out of the woodwork and short memories.

I'm not so much buying into the current string of rumours, half-truths and genuine troubles in, around and about Northern Spirit, but you have to question the motives behind some of the bitching about club chairman, Remo Nogarotto.

The issue involving Tony Perinich, Robbie Enes and the Players' Union is peripheral to some of the other crap being tossed in the general direction of Nogarotto.

I honestly don't know if Nogarotto has or hasn't done the right thing by the players or the union or the club's apprentices - bank on 'Inside Soccer' to get the full story at some point - but at this stage I'm a little over several smarties sticking the boots in for several other reasons.

What should be paramount in the

minds of everybody queueing up to take a potshot at Nogarotto is that without his vision, dedication and hard work, there might never have been a Northern Spirit in the first place.

That goes double to a couple of his critics from within the club, all of whom have enjoyed a fair slab of the spoils of the club's success to date.

And those successes have been considerable.

As for Nogarotto and Spirit, a healthy dose of reality probably won't do the club any harm after the charmed run the club received from the media, on the paddock and at the box office in its inaugural season.

One issue I do have with Nogarotto - and similarly this goes for Perth Glory



Spirit Chairman Remo Nogarotto: the inspiration behind one of the NSL's biggest clubs.

coach, Bernd Stange - is that he should not be buying into the national team commitments of Spirit coach and Socceroo assistant, Graham Arnold.

At the time of writing Nogarotto was emphatic in requesting that Arnold miss Australia's match-up with Hungary this week, just as Stange, for very different reasons, had publicly said that enigmatic Perth midfielder, Kasey Wehrman, should be left out of the Socceroo touring party for the Four Nations Tournament last week.

Particularly at professional clubs like Perth and Spirit, the very nature of playing or coaching is career oriented, thus denying career opportunities flies in the face of the very ethic upon which professional football is built.

International footy is the ultimate reward for these blokes and anybody with a problem with getting the best we can on the paddock and in the dug-out for Australia should reconsider what is best for the game.

Former Carlton general manager, Lou Sticca, made an ass of himself earlier this year when he whined loud and long about Mark Atkinson and Sean Douglas for a "mickie mouse" New Zealand international.

This self-serving manipulation of who plays or doesn't at international level is incredibly hypocritical coming from a nation which is up in arms every time the likes of Leeds try to stiff us over Harry Kewell.

This is not a new flash. For those of you fortunate enough to have seen the kid play, you'll already know that Ivan Ergic is just a teensy bit special.

It's just that every time I see this Perth kid play he impresses more and more.

I saw Paul Trimboli's first season and Mark Viduka's first NSL game and I have no hesitation in saying that Ergic is destined to be one of this league's 'next big things'.

While on Perth, Ergic's teammate, Con Boutsianis, is surely now fairly and squarely back in Sir Frank's reckoning.

Missing for a week, 'Boutsi' bounced back with a ripper double against the Knights and is playing, I believe, better than he has ever before.

Once an eye-catcher as one of South Melbourne's 'Baby Blues' of the early 1990's, Boutsianis is just as spectacular but far more consistent.

If nothing else, for a bloke who has been publicly dacked in recent years, it would be nice to see his renewed dedication to footy acknowledged and rewarded.

Word has it Boutsi's lawyer, the well-respected Evan Kakulas has not received an offer in writing from Glory for next season, despite the club saying they have tabled an offer.



Perth Glory's Con Boutsianis: the free-kick specialist in the best form of his career.

I honestly am trying to steer clear of ref bashing, but it is enough for me that Adelaide Force coaching legend, Zoran Matic, exploded into a rage rarely seen after his team went down at Parramatta Power a week ago to make comment.

After watching Gerry Connolly negotiate a testing Newcastle - Northern Spirit clash with just a single yellow card just 24 hours beforehand, the contrast was savage when Brett Hugo took the whistle for the Parramatta - Force game.

As last week's 'Inside Soccer' stats revealed there were 44 free-kicks awarded during the game, eight cards dished out and 13 offside calls, for a grand total 65 stoppages over the 90 minutes of game time.

I sincerely believe that a stoppage approximately every one and a half minutes was not reflective of the nature of the game itself.

It was painful and as slow as sucking the sap from a tree.

And I felt particularly sorry for the Parramatta Power people, who had spent the previous evening at Parramatta's opening NRL game of the 2000 season giving out free passes to rugby league fans in the hope of luring them back to the vast Parramatta Stadium for the NSL clash.

It is no reflection on either David Mitchell's team or Adelaide Force that they were flocking for the exits some time from the end and any possible league converts would have been lost for good, I fear.

My prediction is that while a Carlton and Melbourne Knights merger is as likely as my Camira getting a start in the Melbourne Grand Prix, Carlton will shift their home base to Bob Jane Stadium next year.

The beer garden will stay in some shape or form and they'll still be playing on Friday nights.

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Paul Trimboli: a man of vision and splendour

By Aidan Ormond

Ask any punter, particularly those who follow South Melbourne, and they will all have their favourite Paul Trimboli moments. The ball through that won the Grand final in 1998, the goal off the bench against Israel in the 1989 World Cup qualifier, his service all over the park in Brazil this year. The ABC TV goal of the year in 1989? So many memories for the man now commonly referred to as 'the best Australian player never to play overseas'. But tags like this somehow sound demeaning to a man who has brought so much joy, and success, to South Melbourne in his 338 games for South. This equals Steve Blair's long-standing record.

If he plays this weekend, against Marconi Stallions at Bob Jane Stadium, he will become South's record-holder at 339. This figure would not have been achieved if the Socceroo had gone to an overseas club.

"It's a question I get a lot, the overseas thing," said Trimboli on a rare day off in Melbourne. "It's something I have asked myself a few times. Maybe I didn't chase it enough?"

"I think also when I was in my early twenties (he is 31 this Friday) the international transfer market was not as open as it is now.

"And by the time it was opened up I had established myself in this country. I

was in the national squad, playing regularly with South and life outside of soccer was in place (he has worked as an accountant full-time for the last five years, only now cutting it back to part time.)

"It didn't seem something that was nagging me, you know?" he questioned. "I gotta go overseas" wasn't always in my thoughts. There was so much going on with my life here."

About four years ago the former AIS member went to trial with Manchester City, but his desire not to be away from too long and to "put South out", plus his age at the time (26) conspired to bring him home sooner rather than later.

"Maybe I am too nice!" he observed.

Certainly Trimboli is one of the game's gentlemen, popular with all and at ease with his station in life.

South Melbourne President George Vasilopoulos described him as a "superb ambassador for Australian Soccer" who earns respect "wherever he plays."

"With the young players," Trimboli mused, "we seem to be losing them so early. When I started out, Andrew Marth, myself and John Markovski were playing and fans could watch our progress for a little while at least."

Since joining South Melbourne over a decade ago, fans have grown up with the player simply called 'Trimmers.' In fact it was against South that he was first noticed. Playing at Sunshine George Cross in 1987 the strugglers beat South 4-3 with Trimboli scoring a hat-trick.



His future at Middle Park was planned shortly after that game and he joined the club a season later.

It should have come as no surprise, given the accolades and achievements of Trimboli's youth career. At Brighton juniors, in 1985, he was awarded the Weinstein Medal for the best junior player in Victoria soccer.

The next year he was at the Australian Institute of Sport, and chosen as a member of the Australian Under 16s which travelled to China to take part in the inaugural World Championships. Against the world's best, they did very well.

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SUPER SOCCER THIS SUNDAY AT BELMORE!

UTS SYDNEY OLYMPIC VS NORTHERN SPIRIT

Come and see your team turn up the heat on the North Shore "Silvertails". NSL leaders, UTS Sydney Olympic, boast the best attack and defence in the league. And all our Socceroo Stars will be back in action this weekend. We'll show them what real spirit is all about! Don't miss a minute of this action-packed game at the Home of Soccer - Belmore Sports Ground.

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OLYMPIC IS FLYING HIGH. THE SPIRIT ARE DETERMINED TO GET THEIR SEASON BACK ON TRACK. IT SHOULD BE A CRACKER!

Socceroos in Chile? Yes it was worth it

Comment by John Vrtaric
and Aidan Ormond

Franks Farina took a below strength 18-man squad, and a well-equipped support crew, on his first overseas excursion to Chile, a Continent that we have to re-visit if we are to reach the 2002 World Cup.

The usual player availability scenario took place before the tour and the absence of 'regulars', Craig Moore, Mark Viduka, Tony Vidmar, Mark Bosnich, Kevin Muscat and, of course, you know who, gave new players the opportunity to impress Farina.

And it was that aspect that made the

tour a successful one for the new coach. The results were mediocre, two draws and a first game defeat saw us end up in last position in the four nation tournament, but the performance of the team, and specifically some players, made it a satisfying one from the coach's point of view.

And of course every game in South America is vital to our preparation. Sure the Olyroos are of a more immediate concern, but reports indicate contracts were drawn up on the basis of this being a full national team.

However, there was still the problem of winning games that we dominated, as we did from reports on this tour.

Perhaps the inclusion of a goalscorer and genuine free-kick specialist like Perth Glory's Con Boutsianis, or Gabriel Mendez, could have helped?

This is an aspect that needs to be remedied soon before the important games dawn upon us.

Amongst the positives from South America was the availability, for the first two games at least, and the performance of the captain elect, Paul Okon.

Before his first game in charge of the national team Farina was in a quandary as who should be the captain - Okon has

quickly dispelled any doubt as to who will lead Farina's men in the next few years, with or without Ned Zelic (remember him?) in the team.

From all reports Okon played extremely well and accepted the captain's responsibility as if he has been doing it all his life.

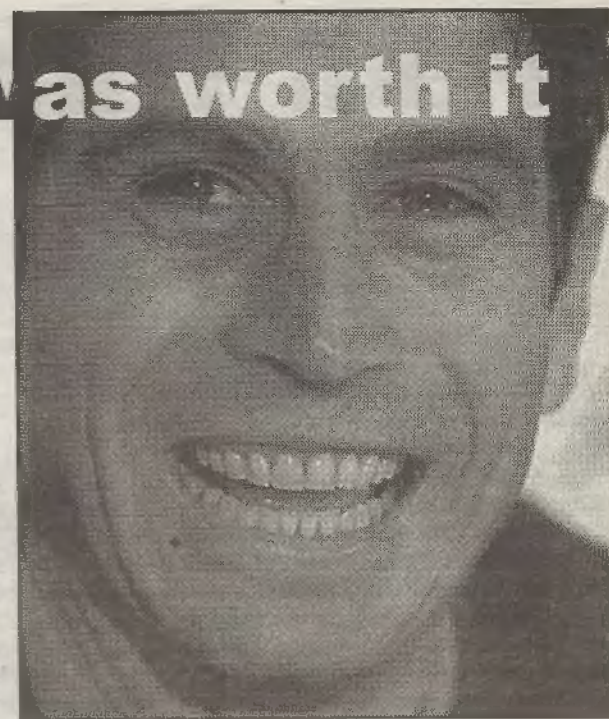
His experience in Belgium and Italy and his stint as captain of our most successful Youth team, Portugal '91, makes him the obvious choice.

The return of Mark Schwarzer, one of our most prominent overseas professionals, was welcomed by all. His absence over the last four years is regrettable and has done neither him nor the national team any favours.

It is unfortunate that such a talented 'keeper is in a three dog fight for the number one position.

To have at our disposal Mark Bosnich, Zeljko Kalac and Schwarzer puts us in a position that we could only dream about twenty years ago.

The absence of Moore and Vidmar, allowed the debut, at the tender age of 29, of Shaun Murphy and the return of Jason



Van Blerk, both plying their trade in the English First Division.

The post selection injury to Matthew Bingley also opened the door for Luke Casserley, recently returned to first team duty after a stint in the Northern Spirit Youth team!

Murphy, who has been on the outer as far as the national teams are concerned since the Barcelona Olympics, played in all three games and was, again from reports emanating from South America, the standout defender.

Casserley, considered by many, if not most, to be extremely lucky to be on the tour was the other unexpected success of the three games.

His performances in Chile have certainly put him in contention for future squads, though, interestingly, he has been excluded from the Hungary squad (visa problems may have been a factor?).

With the return of Muscat and the promotion of Olyroo Lucas Neill to the right wing-back role, they will have plenty to do in front of Farina to impress him.



On the outer with Venables, Agostino seemingly has cemented his position next to Viduka in the national team.

SOCCEROO SQUAD v HUNGARY

(on SBS TV Thursday am)

Bosnich, Kalac, Laybutt, Lazaridis, Moore, Murphy, Muscat, Neill, Vidmar (Tony), Corica, Foster, Johnson, Okon, Skoko, Tiatto, Agostino, Kewell, Viduka.

*Squad subject to late changes. More information on page 26.

Continued from page five

The Joeys finished top of their group, defeating eventual finalists West Germany 1-0, Congo 2-1 and Argentina 1-0. Trimboli got the winner against the West Germans and against the Congo. Unfortunately the Australians were defeated on a penalty shoot-out against Guinea in the Quarter Final.

In 1986 Trimboli was awarded the Northern Division National Youth League Player of the Year whilst playing at the AIS.

"Some fans come up to me and say they used to watch me when they were young children, now they are driving to the games to still see me! It makes me feel I have achieved a level of consistency over the years."

Perhaps understandably it is the big games for the club that remains in the memory of South's talisman.

"There are probably a few games that stands out. The 1991 Grand Final was special because it was a young side brought together by Brian Garvey that basically took three years to be formed.

"It was of course a Melbourne derby, we were coached by Ferenc Puskas, we hadn't won the league in seven years, and it was a game full of drama and excitement, with us beating Knights 5-4 on

penalties. Yeah that was something I remember quite vividly," the former Brighton junior recalled fondly.

"Then we lost five preliminary finals before our next Grand Final against Carlton. To have contributed to the each of these wins and for getting to the finals in so many years was an achievement for me.

"I don't ever get sick of playing. What a great life it is to be paid to do what you love?" he asked. "I do get a bit sick of the plane and bus rides though!"

At national team level Trimboli has represented Australia at three levels, including 36 games for the Socceroos, with 12 goals.

"With Australia that '89 qualifier game against Israel was bittersweet.

"However for drama and emotion, the game against Iran was the one that I will always remember from my Socceroo days. Even though I wasn't involved on the park everything about that night,

except the result of course, was special. It showed what the game of soccer can really do to the nation."

Playing in the green and gold was always an honour for Trimboli, who always turned up when the flag called. However his national team days appear to be over after missing out on selection for the Chile tour.

"It comes back to form ... I don't rule myself out of national team selection but I am realistic."

He does however rule himself out of coaching after his playing days are over.

"I find it hard to show other people what you want them to do. How can I tell them or show them vision? That would be a hard job, plus the personality side of things - I hate disappointing people and you have to be a bit ruthless.

"I tend to think having vision as a player ... it's probably innate. With some of the younger boys you want them to do things and see things but they can't.

"I'm not sure where it is. The thing is it's just normal because it's seems the obvious ball.

"Perhaps I may end up in administration or in the media ... I may be someone who could be of use. I've enjoyed the radio work I have done.

Trimboli's profile is increasing in Melbourne, particularly with the back-to-back NSL titles and the world stage of the world club championships.

"It doesn't bother me as long as they respect your privacy," he says of celebrity. "Most people just come up and wish you the best and I think Australians are pretty good in that respect."

Trimboli signed a three-year contract with his club at the start of this season:

"I've spoken with a few people in the game who have retired and the one thing they say is 'once you retire, there's no turning back.' I really want to enjoy my last few years in the game to maintain my standards.

"The key is what you contribute. It doesn't matter what age you are you have to be contributing and I think I've done that at South over my career," he concluded. No doubt about it.

"South Melbourne will make a special presentation to Trimboli before this weekend's clash.



A home among the gum trees!

By Aidan Ormond

Gum trees estate near Newcastle is where Scott Thomas calls home. His family house is in Koala Close! I'm not joking.

Apt really for a player who fairly exudes that knockabout Aussie demeanor. Yet beneath this laconic style is a fire and desire that has driven Sydney Olympic's midfield for the last two years. And Thomas is convinced the hard work put in by coach Branko Culina is about to pay off for the Sydney side.

"Last year was quality as well," he said, "but everything was new and it's hard to build a team quickly. Things don't happen overnight. Generally with success you need to build it and have stability."

"Usually we go to the beach and cafes, and I do extra training to keep fit," he said of his full-time career.

"I enjoy the club; the boys are first class. Everyone is the best of mates; there's no big heads. I think that is why we have been successful this year."

"If the side stays the same then they can continue to be successful. Branko's training is really good. It's varied and enjoyable."

"Off the park the five owners have really got things together. They seem pretty stable and Nick Politis is one of the best business people around."

"And the fans have welcomed me quite well at the club ... Sydney has been good to me," said Thomas who arrived at the club from Adelaide City two seasons ago.

Teammate Scott Baillie had this to say: "Well, being from Newcastle as well we get on very well. We lived together for about six months. I would never pick a team without a Scott Thomas in it."

"The fighting quality he has and his never-say-die attitude is vital. I've got nothing but praise for him. The fans initially weren't too keen but after a few games they realized that coming from Adelaide was a positive and now they love him."

Baillie is on top of the world since becoming a professional at Olympic (13

months ago he left the Commonwealth Bank after ten years' service). "If we can keep everyone on the park I believe we can be minor premiers."

Not only has Thomas' season been a successful one but also the thrill of having Ian Rush as a teammate is still evident.

"Ian Rush was superb. He said to us that the main in soccer is the simple thing. If someone is in a better position give him the ball. The players really enjoyed it and he was a real gentleman. We all went out on his last night ... he wasn't a big head, he was just like us."

"And we still have Pablo (Cardozo) who is probably the best striker in the country. He has proven himself with his record. He does the job."

Despite hammering South Melbourne 6-0 some weeks ago, Thomas is sceptical about those who are writing off the back-to-back champs.

"There's still a fair few games to go and you can't take anyone lightly. Perth, Wollongong, Carlton, and South Melbourne might be there. With their team and squad you can never write them off. They have a lot of pride."

Thomas grew up in Newcastle and played for them until his move three seasons ago to Adelaide. He clearly has a soft spot for home at Gum Trees estate.

"Newcastle's good because it's quieter and it's easier to get around," said the 25-year-old.

"And the side doing well is great. They've been starved of success. It's a credit to the guys up there. They put their heart and soul in it."

"I did alright in Adelaide but Zoran Matic came in and got rid of the interstate players. After playing every game I got a bit disillusioned. And it's hard when it's a new club even though I settled in well to



Olympic's Newcastle-born midfielder Scott Thomas.

Continued from page three

The Brad Maloney's know this territory well and will probably get over the line, but their draw is vicious with South Melbourne, Newcastle, Spirit, Olympic, Wollongong and Kingz to come in March and April.

Brisbane appeared likely to be capable of anything during the club's 6-3-0 start, but going 3-2-7 since hasn't encouraged anyone that the magic of 96/97 has returned to Suncorp.

Carlton have been there all season, but the truth is that they've beaten no-one.

Stuart Munro's team has won just two of eleven match-ups against teams inside the top six thus far.

With 'winnables' to come against Force, Cosmos and Brisbane to come and just four games against other clubs in the top six in their last 13 Carlton can just about shore up their play-off place, but the best form guide to the Melbourne club's chances will come when they go to places like Newcastle and Olympic.

The Breakers are honest and tough and on an emotional roll, but they lack the hardware to win it all and even the stoic insiders at Birmingham Gardens admit as much.

They'll make it to the big dance for the first time, but without a Lozanovski, Boutsianis, Ergic, Maloney or Trimboli to ice the cake, Lee Sterrey's unlikely success story will end before the grand final.

I believe the genuine contenders are Perth Glory, Sydney Olympic and Wollongong City and, on sheer ability, the Perth side deserves its pre-season mantle of the team most likely to.

If they get top two and a shot at a home grand final I'd say put down your glasses.

But the timing of the decision to not re-sign coach, Bernd Stange, has confused the picture somewhat.

Stories that all is not well inside the Glory camp have done the rounds for weeks and one wonders if the Stange situation will resolve a few of the problems or merely serve to exacerbate them.

We watch with interest.

Part of Wollongong's game plan is to go out and clobber teams early, setting the pace in several games with a league high 14 goals in the opening quarter hour of play.

The addition of Dino Mennillo and Alvin Ceccoli's return to the goalscorers lists gives the Wolves a roster which runs deep with goalscoring threats, but does not address their problem of being unable to close out games.

Wollongong has easily the worst defensive record of any team in the top six and, more critically, the Wolves have been overrun in winning situations six times this term - again, more than any other club in the competition.

Just as they lead the league in early goals, Wollongong has given up an equal league high (along with Canberra) dozen goals in the final fifteen minutes of matches.

That inability to play out the 90 minutes will prove fatal when the pressure goes up a notch in the play-offs.

Olympic would have to do something incredibly stupid to miss the play-offs - or top two and a chance for a home grand final for that matter - but neither the club nor coach, Branko Culina, can boast too much luck when it comes to the finals.

That said, Olympic leads the league offensively and defensively, has been in the top six since week two and, with the best road record in the league, is doing the business both home and away.

And the stat which counts most for me is that Olympic is almost perfect in games against other top six teams, having posted a 5-2-1 record - again, a current league best going into last weekend - against the teams they have to beat when it counts.

The 'X' factor in all this is that this 34-round campaign is the NSL's longest regular season in history, although that figure is likely to favour the so-called fully professional outfits who should, in theory, boast the fitter and better-drilled teams.

Regardless, the league should be rubbing its hands with glee.

The almost consensus pre-season top six or seven predictions included Souths, Spirit, Adelaide and Parramatta, and chances are not one of them will be there when it counts.

Not only is this the most open campaign in recent memory, the likelihood is that some new faces should lead the charge deep into the finals.

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Question: Which African nation is due to play the Matildas in March?

Answer:

Name:

Address:

AUSSIES on the world stage

A round-up of how our Aussies players fared abroad this last week ...

BOSNICH VERSUS KEWELL THE HIGHLIGHT IN PREMIER

The highlight game featuring Aussies Abroad this week was the big clash between the top two teams on the English Premier League ladder, Manchester United and Leeds United.

Mark Bosnich was in the Manchester goal and Harry Kewell was the main threat in the Leeds team, despite reports of an ankle injury. Bosnich emerged victorious as Manchester beat their nearest challenges to open up six point lead again.

Both players played well with Kewell being Leeds' most dangerous player while Bosnich made a number of good saves.

In other games of a sparse English Premier league weekend, with the FA Cup taking centre stage, Mark Schwarzer returned to the struggling Middlesbrough line-up after his trip to Chile.

The Aussie was able to help ease the pressure on manager Bryan Robson as he kept his goal intact in a 2-0 home victory over Coventry for whom Aussie John Aloisi is still on the injured list.

In the Nationwide Division One Manchester City drew 1-1 away to fellow promotion chasers Huddersfield. Danny Tiatto returned from his successful tour to Chile with a 78th minute substitute appearance while fellow Aussie Danny Allsopp remained on the bench.

In QPR's away 1-1 draw with Barnsley George Kulscar played a full game as his team inched its way towards the promotion play-offs position.

Jason Kearon was in the Crewe Alexander goal as they lost 1-2 at home to Ipswich - a defeat that puts them back into third last spot.

Craig Foster returned from Chile to warm the bench for the duration of the game for Crystal Palace as they lost 2-0 to Nottingham Forest - Nick Rizzo, unable to crack a first team spot this season, entered the fray as a 73rd minute substitute.

One of the form teams of the last few weeks, Sheffield United had another superb win as they thrashed West Bromwich Albion 6-0.

Sheffield's Shaun Murphy, one of the standout players in Chile, was rewarded with a well earned rest in the 82nd minute after having picked up a yellow card early in the game.

West Brom's Jason Van Blerk, another Chile returnee, remained on the bench.

Birmingham's 1-4 away win over Swindon saw Stan Lazaridis continue his comeback from injury. The win puts the team into fifth position and well in contention for a play-off position which might see Lazaridis, who was replaced in the 68th minute of the Swindon game, back in the Premier League.

Swindon's Aussie 'keeper, Frank Talia remained on the bench for the full 90 minutes.

In the Nationwide Second Division Millwall carried on its winning way with a 3-1 home win over Bournemouth. Lucas Neill celebrated his call up for the full national team for the game against Hungary by playing a full game as did fellow Aussie Tim Cahill.

In Reading's 2-2 away draw with Scunthorpe Aussie Andrew Bernal was not included in the away team's squad.

Tony Vidmar's absence from Chile

allowed him to take his place in last week's St Johnstone/Rangers game in which he played a full game and scored the goal that allowed the visitors to gain an uninspiring 1-1 draw.

Craig Moore also played the full game and was instrumental in the injury suffered by team-mate Lorenzo Amoroso after the two collided.

Also early last week Celtic had a win in the CIS Insurance Cup when it beat Kilmarnock 1-0, with Mark Viduka playing a full game but not scoring this time.

In the weekend's Tennents Scottish Cup, Rangers had a fortunate 0-1 win over Greenock Morton with both Craig Moore and Tony Vidmar both playing full games and the former scoring the only goal of the game in the 50th minute.

In the German Bundesliga Eintracht Frankfurt had a home win over 1860 Munchen for whom Ned Zelic played a full game but Paul Agostino was not in the squad due to injury.

In Hertha Berlin's 2-1 home win over Hamburg Josip Simunic was not in the home team's squad due to injury, a factor that has kept him out of the Australian squad for the Hungary game as well.

In the Dutch League Zeljko Kalac played a full game as Roda JC had a 2-2 away draw with FC Den Bosch whilst Jason Culina is still biding his time in Ajax's reserve team (see interview p.25.)

In the Italian Serie A game between Fiorentina and Roma Paul Okon was brought into the action in the 73rd minute but on this occasion he probably would have preferred to stay on the bench as Roma won 4-0.



Bladerunner: Sheffield United's Soccerroo Shaun Murphy.

"But off the pitch you do get players who will mix from either side. It's quite well known Giovanni Van Bronckhorst and Henrik Larsson are very friendly as well. We don't see it as a problem."

But Moore stressed: "Whatever has happened at Celtic our job doesn't change. We still have to go out there and pick up as many points as possible."

"We're not concentrating on what Celtic are doing. There are a lot of matches left, but we know if we go out and win the majority of our remaining games it doesn't take a genius to work out we'll then win the title."

"No game is easy if you don't approach the match in the right manner. Every team is fired up when they meet Rangers, and St Johnstone will be no different in that regard."

"I've played a lot more games this season than I have any other season so I think it has been my most consistent and best at Rangers. When you're playing week in and week out it helps."

Meanwhile more rumours surrounding Viduka - current reports emanating from Scotland is the that one of Europe's top agents has been hired to help find Viduka a Serie A club.

It is believed that deal broker Vicenzo Morabito has been drafted in to hawk Scotland's leading scorer around Italy's wealthiest clubs.

It is unclear at this stage whether Morabito - the man behind Brian Laudrup's move to Rangers in 1994 - is operating as a middle man under Celtic's instructions or those of Viduka's representatives IMG.

But he has already received what are being described as "encouraging signals" from three of the country's top-flight clubs.

When contacted, Morabito, the normally unflappable Italian coughed: "I can't speak about that at the moment. It would not be fair. It's impossible for me to comment."

It is believed that Celtic have entered into a secret agreement with IMG to move Viduka on at the season's completion.

But a transfer will only go through if Celtic - who will accept no less than pounds 8million for the player who cost them pounds 3m in 1999 - are satisfied with the fee and the player himself is happy to join up with the proposed buyers.

The player has continually denied any interest in moving ever since his contingent of IMG agents arrived in Scotland to discuss his future with Celtic in December.

A friend said: "Mark doesn't want to get involved in all the politics - he just wants to play football. Right now, it looks certain that he'll be doing that elsewhere next season."

By Scott O'Donell

The number of Australian players plying their trade in South-East Asia this year has dropped dramatically. There are a couple of reasons for this.

Firstly, Malaysia has banned the use of foreign players for their state teams, and secondly, clubs in Singapore are finding it increasingly difficult to secure sponsors, therefore reducing their operating budgets, which means some clubs are signing their foreign players on only eight or ten month contracts.

Unfortunately for Australian players, the money being offered by some clubs in Singapore is no where near what it used to be, therefore making it more viable to play in the National League, where the competition is stronger and in most cases, the money is better.

S-League clubs are now looking to other Asian countries, particularly, Thailand to fill their foreign quota of four players.

At present there are only three confirmed Australian players signed by S-League clubs. This is in stark contrast to the eleven players who played in the S-League last season.

Darren Stewart, who had a great year for Balestier Central last year, has resigned. Darren was the captain and an inspiration to the young players in his team and was instrumental in getting them through to the Singapore Cup semi-finals last season.

Emie Tapai is another Aussie who

has been retained by his club, last year's champions, Home United. Although he won't have his mate Vlado Bozinovski with him this year they will still be one of the favourites for the title again this year.

A newcomer to the S-League this year is former Australian Youth player, Tony Carbone. Tony has been signed by two-time wooden-spooners, Marine Castle.

On the coaching front, gone are David O'Connor and Jimmy Pearson. However, Alan Vest still remains at the helm of Geylang United. Vest has strengthened his squad from last year adding Kiwi international and former Perth Glory defender, Gavin Wilkinson as well as former Morewell Falcons striker, Brian Bothwell.

In Malaysia former Head Coach of the AIS, Ron Smith, is now the Technical Director for the Football Association of Malaysia and is also in charge of their National Youth team.

Aside from the professional football scene in Singapore, the Singapore Cricket Club is holding their prestigious "Soccer 7's" tournament on 27th - 28th May 2000 and is looking for teams from Australia to participate. There are two categories: Open and Masters (over 35). In the past, such big name players such as Kevin Keegan, Bobby Charlton, and Pat Jennings have participated.

If you are interested and want more information, visit the website: www.sccc7.org.sg or E-mail them on: soccer7s@sccc.org.sg.

With so many Aussies abroad it is a regular occurrence to see them on opposite sides of the field, but Rangers defender Craig Moore insists it is possible to remain Old Firm friends with Aussie colleague Mark Viduka at Celtic - even if certain subjects must remain off-limits.

Moore admits he has avoided any contact with his pal Viduka after the striker became embroiled in a half-time dressing-room bust-up midway through Celtic's Scottish Cup humbling by Inverness.

Moore believes putting Old Firm rivalry to one side away from the pitch can be done.

He said: "I've not been trying to get hold of Mark with all that's happened there in the past few days."

"I've just let it be because I know I'll be linking up with him in a week anyway as we've got a friendly with Hungary on the 23rd of this month."

"I'll speak to him then but it won't really be to go into anything in particular, it'll just be a general chat to see how he has been getting on. There's a good banter between us."

"We don't see it as a problem to go out and be seen with each other even though Mark plays for Celtic and me and Tony Vidmar are at Rangers."

"We've been friends for years so just being at rival clubs makes no difference. Don't get me wrong when you're playing for 90 minutes you still want to go out there and win the match."

PFA Dispute:

The battlelines are drawn

By Aidan Ormond

It would be tempting to suggest that there is more to the PFA/Northern Spirit dispute than meets the eye - Remo Nogarotto, with his links to the Liberal Party and Brendan Schwab, the union man. A good old stoush between the Left and Right? Capitalist versus Socialist?

While it would be easy to view this dispute through such a political prism, essentially this is a issue about the interpretation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement and workers rights i.e. players, to be paid 100% of their entitlements and to have freedom of association.

At Spirit, the players earn very well indeed. They should thank their lucky stars that a man like Remo Nogarotto came along and provided such lucrative full-time employment on a scale virtually unheard of in local football, certainly on the eastern seaboard.

The club has also grabbed the imagination of the soccer-starved north shore of Sydney. Even in sixth from bottom place, they can pull bigger crowds than just about everyone; they even have the verve to go about signing world stars such as Nicola Berti (with another global name currently being worked on.)

In other words, the club is very good for local footy and is far from being miserly in their player remuneration. They even give young players the opportunity to become apprentices

So it is with this in mind that Spirit Chairman Remo Nogarotto must feel hard done by. His club has been dragged into the headlines by a dispute that at one stage threatened the registration of Nicola Berti.

But this point must be made.

If there are players with a genuine claim to entitlements owed, these employees must be paid. That is a given. It is a legal and moral obligation.

If there has been any administrative sloppiness in this area then I am sure the club will be first to admit it. Their integrity should not have to be questioned.

Having said that the PFA, through their CEO Brendan Schwab, has been very quick to jump on this issue. Schwab, a didactic huckster for the virtues of the PFA, is seeking legal recourse.

Their view is that a new player cannot be registered if there is money owed to existing players. They also believe two

players have been sacked from Spirit and, that there is an issue regarding the full-time employment of apprentices receiving under the minimum wage set out in the CBA.

It is unclear whether the grievance period - whereby the club can remedy the situation before it is taken to a third party for arbitration - has been exhausted.

Nogarotto had this to say about the dispute. "The Collective Bargaining Agreement largely pre-dated our entry into the league. When it was put forward no-one had contemplated an apprenticeship scheme like we have.

"It's no secret we have modeled our apprenticeship scheme on the UK versions. We pay them what we feel is a reasonable wage and they, and their parents or guardians, sign the contract. So there is no suggestion of under-handedness. All parties were agreeable to this.

"Now I am being accused by Brendan Schwab of using apprentices as slave or menial labour. He should go the UK and have a look at their apprenticeship programs.

"An apprentice works full-time in other industries.

"He (Schwab) has manipulated this issue and used Nicola Berti's registration as a cause célèbre. The PFA sees itself as the preserver of footballers' rights. My response to that is that at my club the conditions and base salaries of my players don't require the intervention of the PFA.

"One player in dispute has made nearly a quarter of a million dollars and he has played only 12 games. So it's a bit rich when he goes me for win bonuses of \$1,800 for team sheets he never appeared on.

"There is a dispute over win bonuses. That's it. I can understand if the player was earning 20,000, but if your base is so high it compensates you for the high and lows."

Nogarotto added that there was no fear and intimidation at the club. "I will continue to negotiate contracts with players and their managers and as far as I'm concerned, Brendan Schwab can go eat a meat pie!"

Brendan Schwab had this to say: "The matter at the moment is in the hands of our lawyers. Spirit denies sacking the players, but our legal advice is unequivocal. Comments like 'you're finished' and 'you'll never wear my colours

again' constitute a dismissal.

"What's particularly concerning is that the comments are in direct response to the players seeking advice from the PFA and also seeking to enforce basic entitlements under the CBA.

"We are extremely concerned with the conduct of the club. There are breaches not only of the CBA but the freedom of association of the workplace relations Act.

"We see this dispute as being of fundamental importance to this game's capacity to go forward.

"We disagreed with Nicola Berti's registration but we are not upset. We think it's a coup for the sport and Spirit should be congratulated.

"Our whole objective is that financial obligations are met. However, the registration issue is not foremost in our mind. The sacking of the two players is now our foremost concern."

Soccer Australia's Stefan Kamasz has his say: "There is no doubt that the contract in place at Northern Spirit regarding the apprentices does contravene the Collective Bargaining Agreement. However," he said, "it is my view that the Agreement is deficient in that area because that side of things was never addressed in the negotiations.

"Soccer Australia was notified on the Friday of these concerns, which was a couple of hours before Brendan Schwab went public with his concerns. I had not even seen any of his correspondence on that day, which lead me to say that his comments were premature.

"He (Schwab) had said Spirit need to be publicly accountable, I said, after he had gone public, there was no need for that, they (Spirit) should be accountable to Soccer Australia.

"He had put the mockers on a good news story regarding Berti and had served no useful purpose.

"I believe Schwab has taken the matter too far, regarding the Berti registration, and going to court is contrary to the collective agreement in my view.

"I hung up on him the other day for questioning my integrity ... he may bring the downfall of the Collective Agreement if this goes to court.

"I also think he has harmed the PFA's public reputation."

I wonder what Nicola Berti thinks of all this?

"The usual NSL statistics for his page can now be found on page 26.



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Hendo steals the show from Nicola Berti

NORTHERN SPIRIT 1

Bilokapic 53.

BRISBANE STRIKERS 0

Friday night at North Sydney Oval, Sydney. Crowd 10,438.



MATCH STATS:



NORTHERN SPIRIT: P Henderson, P Wearne, M Cunico, P Bilokapic, P Moss, S Cranney, N Berti (T Cranney 62), A Griffiths, M Langdon (J Sobczyk 84), R Slater, A Saad (S Catanzaro 71).



BRISBANE STRIKERS: D Duke, M Bell, B Ditton (A Davidson 72), S McLaren (C), P Dwyer, J North, W Srhoj, P Grierson, W Baldwin (D Pilic 78), N Meredith, M Battistin.

Yellows:
Strikers: Duke 82.

Best Players:

3. PAUL HENDERSON (SPIRIT)
2. Adam Griffiths (Spirit)
1. Nick Meredith (Strikers)

Referee: Eddie Lennie



Nicola Berti: short of match fitness but showed touches of class.

By Paul Goodwin

This was a tale of two keepers and two patched-up teams. Graham Arnold came home early from his duties in Chile and decided that he would bring Paul Henderson back in goal, in place of John Perosh, having

given the matter some thought over recent games.

All the other changes he made were forced upon him, including the absence of the two players he so quaintly described as being 'on holiday', Robbie Enes and Tony Perinich.

Henderson had looked good when taking over from Perosh a few weeks earlier, when the other keeper had been suspended, but Arnold kept faith with Perosh as his form had been quite sound.

In its last four matches, however, Spirit had conceded 12 goals and that statistic may have convinced the assistant Socceroo coach and Northern Spirit boss to restore the crowd favourite 'Hendo' to the side.

And he was not disappointed.

Danny Duke in the Strikers goal made one bad fumble and from it the home side scored the only goal of the game, a goal which provided the side with its first ever win against the Brisbane Strikers and avenged a 2-0 loss on the same ground seven weeks earlier.

Brisbane is one of the sides Spirit must meet four times in this lop-sided season - the other is Marconi - and honours are even with the game in Brisbane drawn 2-2.

Nicola Berti made his eagerly anticipated debut and clearly attracted a larger crowd than would otherwise have attended.

Given that there were only just over 7,000 at the last Spirit Park match against South Melbourne and that the North Sydney team was coming off a 4-1 loss, the 10,000 plus crowd was a huge boost to the club.

As their chairman Remo Nogarotto said after the game, 'How many sides coming off a loss like we had last week would pull over 10,000 to the next game as we did tonight?'

He did have a point. Whether they return next time will depend on how the team fares in its outing this coming weekend, their much tougher assignment at Belmore Sports Ground.

Certainly they would not be coming back for more of this kind of football, for it was a battling performance and not a particularly pretty one. But the locals got the precious points.

Berti almost got the chance to score with his first touch after less than 90 sec-

onds.

Spirit Skipper Robbie Slater found Sean Cranney bursting down the right and fed him a fine pass. Cranney delivered the ball into the box for Berti at the near post, but the Italian could not get a clean look at the ball and the keeper tidied up from the offered shot.

Brisbane gradually got into the game and the corner count favoured them as the first half wore on.

The Strikers had three chances in this period.

In only the seventh minute a lob from Wade Baldwin just cleared the bar, in the 38th Jade North ran onto a lovely diagonal pass from Brad Ditton and from inside the area blazed the ball over the bar.

And on half time Wayne Srhoj hit a shot low and wide, when he had got in behind the defence.

Brisbane nearly caught Henderson out in the 51st when a Nick Meredith free kick from deep on the left was floated in and among a sea of defenders Peter Dwyer got a late headed touch forcing the big Spirit keeper to tip the ball over the bar.

Two minutes later came the goal, reminiscent of a goal involving Mark Rudan in another recent North Sydney game.

Slater despatched a free kick from wide on the left and the ball arrived at the far post where Sean Cranney headed it back across the face of goal.

Brisbane's stand-in keeper, Danny Duke, tried to clutch at the ball as it sailed across, but could not get a clean contact and big Spirit defender Bilokapic used his strength to get a head to the ball and propel it into the roof of the net. 1-0 then to the Spirit in a game Strikers' coach John Kosmina always believed to be headed for a scoreless draw to that point.

After this goal the home side began to press home their advantage and went close a number of times.

Brisbane managed a few dangerous sorties upfield, but had their hands full with some fresh legs introduced by Arnold in the last half hour.

Troy Cranney came on for Berti who had problems adapting to the cricket pitch area and hobbled off with a sore foot, though it had always been the plan to give him no more than an hour on debut.

Graham Arnold admitted afterwards that he had not realised Berti was so unfit, despite the player's own admissions beforehand.

'He was well short of a run!' he quipped.

Arnold tried the 4-4-2 formation favoured by national coach Frank Farina in the Socceroos' latest games, a decision he reached largely due to his lack of manpower and Brisbane's style of game.

He brought in Paul Wearne for his first game in over a year, filling in at left back and had Phil Moss marking on the right. Bilokapic was joined by Michael Cunico in the centre and this pair was charged with winning the aerial challenges.

Arnold said that he would continue with the strategy indefinitely.

Missing players such as Matthew Bingley, Luke Casserly and striker David Seal reduced the coach's options anyway.

During the game his most pleasing substitution was Simon Catanzaro, for Abbas Saad, who had succumbed to another niggling injury.

The team lost nothing by this change as last year's NYL player of the year (north) almost scored twice inside the last



Paul Henderson: a dominating performance for the Spirit keeper.

ten minutes.

After giving a central marker the slip in the 79th Catanzaro had a snap shot from just outside the area which the young Brisbane keeper could not cover, but the ball struck the right post and was immediately booted to safety.

Catanzaro also made a very smart move on the left in the 85th and after an exchange of passes delivered a nice cross which unfortunately went begging.

Slater did well to flick on a through pass for the speedy Catanzaro in the 89th, but with the defenders racing in to issue the challenge the youngster fired into the side netting from a tight angle.

Spirit had one scare near the end when an attempted header back by Wearne was intercepted by Peter Grierson, but the alert Henderson came out off his line in positive style to claim the ball.

Henderson was at his most exuberant, throwing long passes, racing yards from his line to intercept crosses and generally commanding his area all night.

Once or twice he could not reach the ball, but still got a punch or a touch in and danger was averted.

But the poor young man at the other end, Duke, was not so lucky.

Brisbane coach John Kosmina felt that his side was well below its best due to injuries and other problems at the club. Glenn Gwynne had a family matter which made him pull out of the game late in the week and many others were absent, such as Paul Foster and Chay Hews, two players Kosmina felt were badly missed.

Arnold's last words were reserved for his new signing Nicola Berti.

• "He's down to earth and a good influence on the team. He has settled in very easily and should be a big help to us."

Berti also spoke about his experience with the cricket pitch which left him with a foot in ice.

"I play in the centre", he said, "so I cannot stay off the cricket pitch, even though I tried to whenever I could."

"I hope next week there is no cricket pitch", he concluded in his fair use of English.

No cricket pitch, perhaps, but a very tough opponent in Sydney Olympic and with that in mind Signor Berti may need to step up a gear or three, to be effective in that particular game....

"Another nine days and I should be fitter too", he added with a grin.



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Ivo and Co. finish off Power ... again

CANBERRA COSMOS 1

Arranz 2
PARRAMATTA POWER 0

Friday night at Bruce Stadium, Canberra. Crowd 2,251



MATCH STATS

CANBERRA COSMOS:



Barlow, Popovich,
Burt (Milin 65), Polak,
Arranz, Hamilton,
James, Hooker, Clark,
Roberts, De Jesus



PARRAMATTA POWER:

Gibson M, Barrett,
Santalab (Eagleton
HT), Plesa (Erich 72),
Burns,

Sterjovski, Griffiths (Kukucka HT),
Berry, Byrnes, Gibson J, Bennett

Yellows.

CC: nil

PP: Plesa (25), Burns (51)

BEST PLAYER

3: I. DE JESUS (CC)

2: M. Gibson (PP)

1: R. Hooker (CC)

Referee: P. Mur

The only goal of the game came with the first foray by either team. After only 100 seconds a ball from Andrew Clark sent Harry James down the left.

His cross ambled its way into the box and sat too invitingly for David Arranz (pictured below) to send into the top of the net.

The goal itself broke a run of 13 games where the Cosmos hadn't scored first.

Normally an early goal breaks the ice for the two teams generating much action at both ends, but in this match it was mostly one way, that being in favour of the Cosmos.

Playing one of their best games in front of the small home crowd, the locals created many scoring opportunities, some of them very good, yet just could not find the finishing touch to close the game.

Power had to wait until the 17th minute before they even came close with Richard Plesa heading towards goal, but Danny Burt was there to head the shot over for a corner.

Yet beforehand the Cosmos had two more chances to increase their lead. An Ivo De Jesus free kick was headed wide by Burt and Jason Polak, playing with a protective brace around his fractured wrist, sent a ball to PJ Roberts who in turn set up James but his shot was well saved by Mike Gibson.

Gibson was to be in the action for most of the game, and surely his performance in this game must give his coach, David Mitchell, some pleasure with his number one keeper Andrew Crews still out with an injury.

Following the Plesa attempt, the Power were able to take the initiative. A solid snap shot from John Gibson was grabbed at the second attempt by Grant Barlow and then in the 24th minute Mile Sterjovski was able to get the ball in the net, only to be ruled out for off-side.

After Polak saw his shot well held by Gibson following a nice move involving Roberts and De Jesus, the Power nearly shot themselves in the foot.

A quick free-kick from Gibson was mis-directed and fell to Polak. He passed to De Jesus on the edge of the box, who turned well but sent his shot over.

Just prior to the break neither side could take advantage of some open opportunities. Roberts sent his shot over after a cross from James and Steve Berry followed suit with his attempt after robbing Burt.

The Power came out in the second half more positive and dominated for the first 7 to 8 minutes, but that was to be it for the rest of the game, except for a lone opportunity late in the game from Jacob Burns which sailed wide after a good buildup.

Burns should have done better with a free header on the edge of the six yard box after only seven minutes of the half. His deflected attempt went straight to the relieved Barlow.

From then on it was all the home side and the Cosmos should have put this game away with any of a number of clear opportunities.



Plesa cleared as last defender after a cross from De Jesus threatened to open up a rather ragged defence.

A quarter of an hour in and Polak sent a lovely ball to De Jesus, but the spin

match.

* Two minutes on and Harry James sent a ball over the defence with De Jesus beating the off-side trap. He drew two defenders before setting up Andrew Clark free at the top of the box, but he too sent his shot nowhere near the goal.

The game petered out with the Cosmos playing with the ball near the corner flag and wasting time.

It was a good result for the home crowd, who have seen the team play so well in the past two games at Bruce, yet only leave with a draw in each.

Both coaches agreed that the Cosmos deserved to win the game. Sermanni was more pleased that his team was able to get away with a clean sheet. He added "James and De Jesus are working well together."

"Their work is creating more chances. Also, I think if we had scored a second goal, that would have knocked the heart out of them".

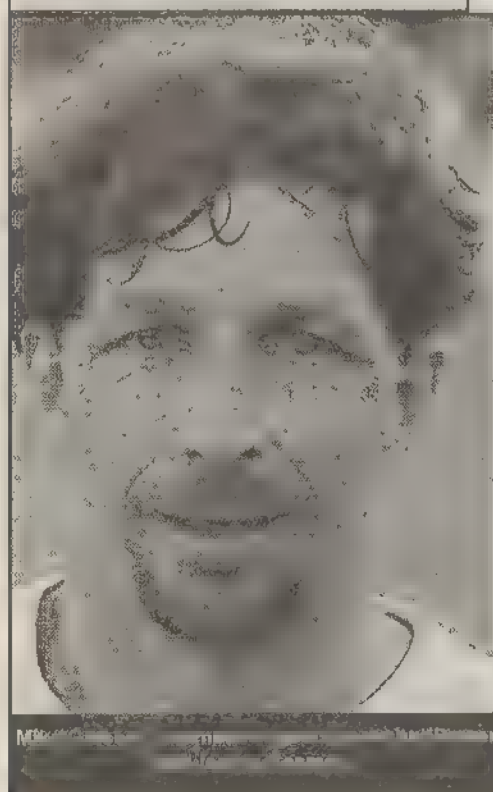
Mitchell said that it was always difficult coming down to Canberra. "We didn't deserve to win. We had a couple of half-chances, but nothing really concrete".



caused Ivo to misjudge the bounce and the chance was snuffed out quickly. A minute later De Jesus was the only one wanting to retrieve a ball near the goal-line. His cross went along the cross bar and was desperately cleared by Gibson and his defence.

In the 26th minute of the half Robbie Hooker, who was playing superbly in defence keeping both Sterjovski and his partner Joel Griffiths at bay, found De Jesus in space down the left. De Jesus beat Peter Bennett to clear his way for a shot at goal, but his errant attempt went well over.

At the half-hour mark De Jesus and Polak played a delightful 1-2 to set up the latter. Polak's volley needed a world class save from Gibson to keep his team in the



By Nick Guoth

A rare event happened to the Cosmos last Friday night. No it wasn't that they won, but it was that we have seen the first team the Cosmos has scored a double against in their four-and-a-half year history.

A 3-2 win at Parramatta last November has now been coupled with the 1-0 victory at Bruce to give the Power an unenviable record.

In fact the two teams played a pre-season friendly and there too the Cosmos won 1-0.

Cosmos coach Tom Sermanni puts it down to the style of game the Power play, which he explains as similar to Brisbane, that being very British. Sermanni believes the style suits his team.

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Adelaide City: lost in the Valle of Glory

ADELAIDE CITY FORCE 1

Mori 75 (pen)

PERTH GLORY 2

Boutsianis 1, Edwards 19

Friday night at Hindmarsh Stadium, Adelaide Crowd: 4,880



MATCH STATS:

ADELAIDE CITY FORCE

Knezevic, Hornjik (Hassell 32), Tobin, Talladira (Zelic 89), Mori, Sabljak, Vidmar, Kemp, Costanzo, Pelosi (Brain 61), Kim.



PERTH GLORY

Petkovic, Trajkovski, Miller (Afkos 39), Naven, Thorp, Valle, Halpin, Junior, Edwards, Schwertz (Ergic 79).



Boutsianis (Buljan 83).

Yellows

Force: Pelosi 50

Glory: Edwards 69, Boutsianis 75

Best Players:

3 Valle (Glory)

2 Trajkovski (Glory)

1 Sabljak (Force)

Referee: Simon Micallef

latched on to a cross from the right and shot, taking Vilson Knezevic by surprise. Knezevic fumbled, the ball fell, it for goal poacher Con Boutsianis, and he put it away.

This shook City awake, Nick Sabljak sending a high cross into the box for Claudio Pelosi, but 88.5 Coast fm Bianco Builders Player of the Match Dion Valle headed clear. Damian Mori then passed to Pelosi in the penalty area but Glory cleared to Scott Miller who sliced through the lethargic looking City defence and slammed a shot a hair's breadth wide of the left post.

Frustration from City boiled over when Boutsianis body checked Mori outside the box. First Mori, then Aurelio Vidmar, argued with referee Simon Micallef that Boutsianis should be cautioned, but their pleas fell on deaf ears. Angelo Costanzo sent the free kick high into the box, but the Perth defence was impenetrable.

Again they turned the tables, full-back-cum-striker Robert Trajkovski letting fly from 40 metres. Knezevic, hero one week villain the next, moved late to just tip the ball over the bar.

Alex Tobin leaped to head clear Perth's corner kick and was fouled in the process. The long free kick out of the area went to Pelosi, who streaked onto the ball and raced goalward.

He appeared to be held back and lost possession, leaving him appealing to the ref as Perth went into attack. Possession chopped and changed in the mid-field Mori got the ball and headed for goal.

In scenes reminiscent of the old Adelaide City v Sharks derbies, big 'Hammy' Thorp cut out Mori, as he did for the entire 90 minutes. Glory's confidence was sky high, Trajkovski, Thorp, Troy Halpin and Valle passing the ball around in defence as if City didn't exist.

Miller and Trajkovski dominated the right side of the pitch, making Tobin and Costanzo work overtime.

Sabljak came alive 15 minutes in, combining with Carlo Talladira

and Vidmar to set up City's first chance. Vidmar's finish from 25 metres had ex-City keeper Jason Petkovic beaten, but the ball whistled wide of the right hand post.

Two minutes later, Trajkovski set up Glory's second goal, sending a superb 45 metre pass over the City defence from the right to Edgar Junior on the left.

Junior, unmarked, hit the ball square into the centre of the penalty area for Alistair Edwards running through - 2-0 Glory.

City tried to step up the pace, Costanzo sending a high ball to Viddie in the box, but 100 game Glory man Gareth

Naven headed clear

Talladira then sliced the ball across the face of goal for Mori, but he was one pace too slow. Talladira then sent Viddie away on the left, but Trajkovski, Junior and Halpin surrounded him, forcing him to knock the ball out for a goal kick.

City continued to pump balls in high for Pelosi, but Valle had the better of him until Pelosi was substituted, at his own request, in the second half.

The City pressure almost paid off in the 24th minute with a mad scramble in the penalty area following a City corner on the right.

Perth cleared the ball just past the near post for another corner and another scramble in the box before Glory cleared upfield.

Glory clearly won the desperation stakes, while City, believing they were on the wrong end of referee Micallef's decisions, wasted time remonstrating.

They seemed certain to score, however, after Valle put in a clumsy challenge on Pelosi. Sabljak took the free kick 20 metres out on the right, Pelosi managed to get his head to the ball before Valle. The ball looked on target but went just over the bar.

Tobin put in a series of brilliant desperate tackles on Trajkovski to prevent Glory from scoring again.

City coach Zoran Matic also showed early signs of desperation, substituting an almost invisible Atila Hornjik with Bradley Hassell. Hassell made an immediate impact, heading over the bar just a minute after coming on and laying off dangerous passes to Pelosi, Vidmar and Mori. But Glory's defence was watertight.

Possession see-sawed for the rest of the half, the highlights being the defensive tackling of Tobin and Halpin. Finally City seemed to wake up.

Sabljak forced Petkovic into his first save of the match, with a low and hard shot from 25 metres on the left which took an awkward bounce.

Perth coach Bernd Stange then substituted playmaker Miller who suffered a back injury. City may have heaved a sigh of relief, but sub James Afkos proved just as dangerous as Miller.

Five minutes into the second half chaos ruled. Pelosi, determined to see City on the scoreboard, went down in the penalty box.

The fans started cheering, then booed as referee Micallef indicated a dive and cautioned the striker.

Players from both sides went charging in with hefty tackles, then Valle and Pelosi were involved in an incident which no one seemed to see.

Valle was on the ground Pelosi was holding the back of his head. It appeared to be a head clash of some description. Both received medical attention and resumed their duel.

This fired up Pelosi, who had Petkovic scrambling low to his left to turn away a fierce shot from inside 10 metres. Glory replied through Trajkovski, Matthew Kemp clearing over the bar at the last second.

Louis Brain came on for Pelosi, but could make no impact on the Perth defence.

Glory should have nailed the game in the 65th minute, Trajkovski guilty of a criminal miss.

In a comedy of errors, Knezevic ran out to clear but slammed the ball into Tobin. It rico-



cheted to Trajkovski running in from the right, and with the entire goal open, he wellied his shot over the bar.

What a let-off for City, who almost broke through a minute later. Talladira sent the ball through to Vidmar in the box, but Petkovic was off his line in a flash to dive at Viddie's feet.

The breakthrough finally came in the 75th minute when Trajkovski pulled Vidmar down in the box.

The City players and fans were screaming for a red card, but the ref showed a yellow and pointed to the spot.

Mori, eager to break the goalscoring record, stepped up and sent Petkovic the wrong way - 2-1.

The next 20 minutes saw City get their act together and put constant pressure on Perth.

Mori had two more clear scoring chances but couldn't find the net. Sabljak also sent two skimming wide. Trajkovski missed another sitter for Glory, but the score remained 2-1 for Perth.

Outward bound Perth coach Bernd Stange said he was very happy with his team's performance and that they were on track for the finals, while City Coach Zoran Matic was very pessimistic about City's now slimmer than ever chances of getting into the six.



By Margaret Bowden and Donald Campbell

Perth Glory turned up the heat at an already stifling Hindmarsh Stadium on Friday to continue the Adelaide City hoodoo of being unable to beat the far westerners at home. Glory looked like a Rolls Royce in cruise control, City like a Datsun 280B missing the Carl Veart cylinder. The whole team looked at odds with each other, while Perth entertained the crowd with some superb soccer.

Nineteen seconds from the kick-off Glory were 1-0 up. Robert Trajkovski

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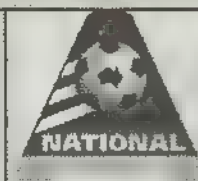
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Curcija breaks the hearts of fighting Falcons

GIPPSLAND FALCONS 0 SOUTH MELBOURNE 1

Curcija 89

Saturday night at Mobil Park. Crowd: 3,416



MATCH STATS:

GIPPSLAND FALCONS

Jevdjovic - Savage - Gotis - Durakovic - Marcina - Puca (Katz 78 min) - Vargas (Nilo 81 min) - Robertson - Hutchinson - Mandic - MacNicol Sub not used Kakos



SOUTH MELBOURNE

Jones - De Amicis (Alagich 68 min) - Oric - Liparoti - Panopoulos - Goutzoulis (Clarkson 60 min) - Lozanovski - Trimboli - Curcija - Anastasiadis (Coveney 60 min) - Vlahos



Yellows:

Falcons: Robertson 16 Vargas 45
South Melbourne: Goutzoulis 19
Anastasiadis 50 Vlahos 90

Best Player:

3 CURCIJA (SOUTH MELBOURNE)
2 Hutchinson (Gippsland Falcons)
1 Marcina (Gippsland Falcons)

The first half started at a slow pace with both sides keen to conserve energy and let the ball do the work. The first chance of the game fell to a lively Curcija who hit a long range effort in the 15 minute, only to see the ball sail high.

South Melbourne through the efforts of Trimboli in midfield began to dictate play with a period of domination that almost saw them score.

Curcija was proving to be a real handful for the Falcons defenders with a clever flick in the 18 minute hitting the crossbar and a long-range effort by Goutzoulis also going close in the 19 minute.

The first chance to the Falcons came in the 23 minute when an impressive John Hutchinson played a beautiful ball over the South Melbourne defence.

Igor "The Phantom" Mandic in his protective mask, ghosted in behind the defence only to be denied by Jones diving well at his feet.

The South Melbourne defence was well on top with Oric and Liparoti negating the high ball game employed by the Falcons.

The experience of Lozanovski and Trimboli in midfield and the lively Curcija up forward had the Falcons defenders on

Durakovic was making decisive interceptions and bringing the Falcons midfield into the game.

Hutchinson and Marcina dominating for the Falcons. Another great chance to Mandic in the 57 minute after lead up play from Hutchinson almost saw the Falcons open their account.

A quick turn on the edge of the box and shot by Mandic yet again well saved by Jones down low to his right.

The Falcons attack was relentless and a great run by Marcina and long range shot rattling the cross bar in the 59 minute.

The Falcons pressure and dominance clearly had Ange Postecoglou worried when in the 60 minute he made a double substitution bringing on Clarkson and Coveney for Goutzoulis and Anastasiadis.

The substitution seemed to stem the Falcons domination and South Melbourne slowly clawed their way back into the match with Coveney almost scoring with his first touch.

A pinpoint cross by Lozanovski in the 71 minute found Coveney unmarked at the far post. His header well saved by Jevdjovic down low.

The game had opened up with both sides going end to end exchanging blows desperate to get a result. MacNicol having a long-range effort well saved in the 75 minute and Falcons having a confident appeal for a penalty turned away.

Juan Nilo a late substitution by Hopkins had the chance to steal the game in the 85 minute when he dispossessed Alagich in the last line of defence only to yet again be thwarted by Jones who forced him to shoot into the side netting.

The Falcons had thrown all they had at South Melbourne who had soaked up the pressure well with a combination of luck and good defending.

A great second half performance by Falcons in which they were unable to consolidate on their domination.

As is often the case, a champion side can not be kept down for 90 minutes. Consecutive corners in the last few minutes to South Melbourne resulted in the first effort being scrambled off the line by Durakovic and the second corner met perfectly by a glancing Curcija header. 1-0 and the victory to South Melbourne.

A relieved Postecoglou after the game, emphasised the importance of the three points to South Melbourne in their endeavour to defend their title, while a devastated Jeff Hopkins praised the efforts of his players and the great support of the Falcons



Michael Curcija - his form is ominous for the Oceania Champions

By Lucio Viggiano

In front of their best crowd of the season, a gallant Gippsland Falcons went down fighting to a late goal by man of the match Michael Curcija. The Falcons threw everything they had at South Melbourne, but were unable to break an eight-year streak in which they have never recorded a victory against the reigning champions.

In hot conditions at Mobil Park, South Melbourne needed nothing less but three points to maintain any hope of making the finals this year.

The Falcons on the other hand were coming off an impressive away victory at Sydney United and determined to stay on the winners list.

the back foot and unable to bring their midfielders into play.

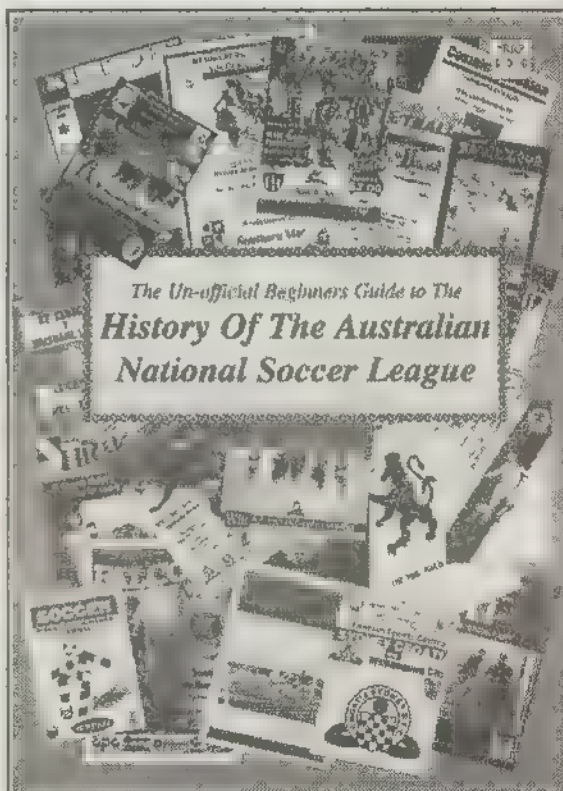
With the oppressive heat, most efforts by both sides were long range and no threat to the respective goalkeepers.

The second half started with the sun down, the lights on and the heat turned up by the Falcons players determined to get a result from the match.

A great run and clever back heel by Mandic in the 49 minute set up Vargas to deliver a perfect cross to MacNicol at the far post. The header well saved down low by the inexperienced Jones in the South Melbourne goal.

The Falcons players were being inspired by their captain and former South Melbourne champion Mehmed Durakovic.

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Culina says "we deserved to win"

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 1

Mennillo 33.

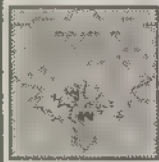
SYDNEY OLYMPIC 1

Arambasic 51.

Sunday night at Brandon Park, Wollongong. Crowd, 7,351.



MATCH STATS:



WOLLONGONG

WOLVES: Pogliacomi, Souris, Ceccoli (Huxley 55), Stanton, Cervinski, Horsley, Reid, Young (Masi 65), Chipperfield, Petrovski (Blake 85), Mennillo.



SYDNEY OLYMPIC: Bouhoutsos, Thomas, Zoricich, Baillie, Juric, Arambasic (Kalantzis 64), Cardozo, Emerton, Wilson, Zorbas (Carle 45), Mendez (Sinozic 73).

Yellows:

Wolves: Mennillo 23, Chipperfield 74, Horsley 89
Olympic: Thomas 68, Wilson 75

Best Players:

3. CARLE (OLYMPIC)
2. Cervinski (Wolves)
1. Pogliacomi (Wolves)

Referee: Matthew Breeze

By Stephen Webb

This was a good result for Wollongong on the night. Not the result Olympic probably deserved. And certainly not the result either team needed with only four points separating the first and fourth side.

Wollongong were ahead at half-time thanks to a brilliant opportunistic goal by recent signing Dino Mennillo. Olympic, though dominating the second period, could do no more than scramble an equaliser.

Highlights of the opening minutes were a David Cervinski tackle on Lindsay Wilson, an early foray down the left by Scott Chipperfield brought to an end by a foul from Peter Zorbas, and a good tackle by Ante Juric on Saso Petrovski as the Wollongong forward made his way into Olympic's penalty area.

George Bouhoutsos made a great save in the eighth minute after Chipperfield made a magnificent individual run at goal from just inside Olympic's half.

When Zlatko Arambasic was brought down outside Wolves' penalty area, Wollongong skipper Matt Horsley headed clear Gabriel Mendez's fine free kick.

Horsley was soon attacking down the right and it was Mendez who was then to coolly get the ball away from Olympic's danger area.

Peter Zorbas took the free kick when Mennillo handballed during an effort to subdue Brett Emerton. The ball fell to three red shirts, none of whom could clear. It shot across goal from right to left and was sent back again by Arambasic, lying on the ground, before Wolves could get it away.

Chris Zoricich held out Stuart Young after Petrovski won the ball down the right touchline. A cross eventually found Chipperfield's head, to no effect.

A good cross came in from Petrovski but Zoricich beat Young on the far post.

Following an Olympic free kick in the 17th minute when Mennillo fouled Scott Thomas, Emerton pulled the ball back for Pablo Cardozo who shot low, demanding a classy save from Les Pogliacomi diving to his right.

Two minutes later Horsley fought his way into a shooting position 22 metres out, his effort swinging and dipping but causing Bouhoutsos little trouble.

Almost immediately Horsley was chasing a long ball back and putting enough pressure on Wilson to make him stumble.

In the 21st minute Petrovski set up Chipperfield whose low shot whizzed right of goal.

Work by Thomas and Zorbas led to a shot from Mendez wide of Wolves' goal: Scott Baillie fouled Horsley and Paul Reid's free kick was held by Bouhoutsos, and when Cardozo beat Reid in midfield, ran at goal and offloaded to Zorbas on his right ... Zorbas wasted an excellent chance, shooting right of the post.

Half way through the half Olympic looked to have settled and were playing the better football. They were attacking more but showing little for their work.

Cardozo hit an easy catch for Pogliacomi. Then he attracted some solid tackling attention from Cervinski.

On the half hour Mendez's cross from the right just beat Juric to the far post. Wolves attacked on the counter and Zoricich had to make an important tackle to stop Young crossing inside the box.

Young then had a chance that was so close the Wolves theme song started up on the public address system. But the ball glanced a post and drifted harmlessly away for a goal kick.

Minutes later it really was time for Wolves fans to celebrate - thanks to a gross error in judgment from Bouhoutsos.

Mennillo was set free wide on the left, so free that the Olympic keeper came out of his area toward him. But Mennillo, still 35 metres out, calmly lobbed the hapless custodian and Wollongong were in the lead.

Almost from the kick off Wollongong were denied a second goal when Chipperfield, instead of slotting the ball past Bouhoutsos, had a rush of blood to the head and fell over his own feet inside the Olympic penalty area.

The remainder of the half was even. Young did a good job beating two Olympic defenders but was literally held out. Chipperfield continued to enact his "Slipperfield" persona but carried out important defensive duties on the right side and in midfield. Pogliacomi saved a shot from wide on the right and Cardozo hit a free kick high over the crossbar.

Alvin Ceccoli had a disappointing half for Wollongong. Playing out of position in midfield, marking Gabriel Mendez, he often looked lost and several times was caught on the ball.

Despite one or two glimpses of form, Emerton produced few goods for Olympic.

After half time, when Olympic apparently were made to consider such things as pride and character (and when Nick Carle was introduced and the visitors played with three strikers, no sweeper and three midfielders) Wolves had an almost impossible task in defending their lead.

Pogliacomi had to make the first save of the half, coming well off his line to meet a high cross from Thomas.

Baillie was busy around the 48th minute, first closing down Chipperfield about to cut the ball back from Olympic's left upright and then clearing a Cervinski header in the goal mouth.

Olympic on the break sent a cross in from the right which fell over Horsley's head to Carle who shot hard and low, forcing Pogliacomi down at the left goal post.

The equaliser came in the 51st minute when a Carle shot rebounded off Pogliacomi into the path of Arambasic. The ball found its way to the back of the net. By no means a pretty goal, but it counted.

Whereas in the first half Olympic had an extra player in defence, they now frequently had a player running free in attack and stretching Wolves on both flanks.

A long ball down the left for Arambasic required the attention of both Horsley and Cervinski. Horsley on his own finally ended a long run by Wilson.

Even Young was called to defend and he did so mightily - chasing, tackling and intercepting - until hurting himself tackling Zoricich.

More and more Wolves were caught napping. And when they did have possession they could rarely play through midfield. Too often their only resort was long lobs or prospective probes to Masi which were nearly always neutralised.

In the 62nd minute Cervinski mopped up Mendez at the upright after the Olympic dynamo had made a dangerous run through the Wolves defence into the penalty area.

Then Cardozo made space for himself and fired in a shot that was deflected wide for a corner.

Wolves continued to fray at all edges.

In the 65th minute there was a glimmer of hope when Mennillo switched to Horsley. Baillie closed Horsley down as he readied himself to shoot. Bouhoutsos punched the corner clear but couldn't hold the next cross. The ball fell to Young in front of goal but his awkward volley flew high over the crossbar.

For the first 20 minutes of the second half the game was still fast and exciting but then it increasingly became punctuated by the referee's whistle: the visitors were getting desperate to score and Wollongong frantically defended.

In the 75th minute, Mennillo, who had been making the best attempts to initiate counter attacks, got a crucial touch to deny Baillie running onto a through ball into Wolves' penalty area.

In the 80th minute Wilson produced a great header under pressure to clear a cross from Chipperfield. A minute later and down the other end Emerton turned Souris and shot inside the right upright - but it was saved well by Pogliacomi. Another minute later and back in Olympic's goal mouth, Masi glanced a Chipperfield cross wide to the left of target. Then Chipperfield was dragged down five metres outside the penalty area.

Carle almost found Kalantzis with a sharp ball into the Wolves area and then Thomas had a wild shot across the face of goal.

Thanks mainly to the skill and industry of Carle and Thomas Wolves were pinned in a defensive position. And a draw looked inevitable.

The last decent chance for a winner came in the 89th minute when Pogliacomi saved spectacularly at the feet of Cardozo. The ball bounced out to Emerton who shot just wide of the right upright.



After the match a "happy but disappointed" Branco Culina was asked if the thought, on the basis of this season's results (including three draws), there was not a lot between the teams? "Not a lot on the scoreboard, no," he replied.

Implying?

He said he thought Olympic were sloppy and didn't start off as well as they would have liked. "I just felt we were a bit slack and I changed it around a little bit and we started winning the ball and running the midfield. That turned the game around."

Culina said Nick Carle gave Olympic penetration and probing that was lacking in the first half. Emerton was disappointing in the first half but when he moved inside in the second half he caused Wollongong some problems. Culina said his running through the middle of the park, as with Chipperfield's, was the feature of the game.

He said Olympic were "a very good team when we're on song and playing well but sometimes you've got to graft out results when you're not playing well".

He said, "We can only blame ourselves because we missed too many chances."

But was he happy?

"We came to make sure we didn't lose."

But was he happy?

He clearly thought they should have won: "Wollongong would not have scored if the goalkeeper didn't contribute ... Look, Sydney Olympic simply deserved to win; should have done so by three or four goals. We didn't. Simple as that."

"We're not scoring as many goals as we should be and conceding soft ones. We've got to work on it."

Wollongong's assistant coach Ron Corry said he thought Wolves played very well in the first half. But in the second half players had tired - Horsley and Chipperfield because of jetlag and Ceccoli because he went into the game with an injury.

"We absorbed quite a lot of pressure in the second half when we tired badly. We can't be unhappy with the result, [though] we possibly could have led by two at half time."

He said Carle gave Wollongong lots of problems down the right in the second half.

Pressed on the matter of Wolves' fitness and second half decline Corry said he thought it was a matter of mental rather than physical fitness.

Annoyed by Culina's less than humble enthusiasm for the ability of his own team, Corry said he thought the encounter was an exciting game to watch and that fans from both sides must have been happy with the result.

Krncevic's side back in six and looking dangerous

MARCONI STALLIONS 2

McDonald 67, Karl 80.

SYDNEY UNITED 0

Sunday night at Marconi Stadium, Sydney. Crowd: 6,120.



MATCH STATS:

MARCONI STALLIONS:

Aceski, Farah, M. Babic, Longo, Invincible, Smith (Renaud 90), Gibson, Zoric, Di Gia McDonald 17), Trajanovski, Duric

SYDNEY UNITED:

Tolios, Jurij, Maric, Palapanis, Genc, J Moric (Rakic 51), Savoca, Arrarte, A. Moric (Jerman 74), Pondeljak, Usljebrka

(Karl 79)

(Younis 68)

Yellows:

Stallions: Nil

United: Savoca 54.

Red: United: Genc 74.

Best Players:

3: FARAH (STALLIONS)

2: Smith (Stallions)

1: A. Moric (United)

Referee: Mark Shield

By John Vrtaric

The depth of Marconi's squad came to the fore not for the first time when two substitutes scored late in the game.

This wasn't the only occasion this season that substitutes have rescued Marconi, and Eddie Krncevic is having tremendous success with the timing of his substitutions.

A few weeks ago, Alex Duric and Vlado Zoric came on and both scored in a 2-0 victory over Brisbane Strikers while Harry Karl came on and scored two goals in three minutes in a 3-0 win over the Melbourne Knights.

In this game one of the substitutions was a forced one when Italian import Pieruigi Gi Gia, making his first starting appearance for the club limped off after 17 minutes. Fortunately for Di Gia and the club the injury, a muscle tear, is unrelated to the knee problem that has kept him out of action for so long, although it is unknown how serious the current injury might be.

Darren McDonald replaced the import and carried on what is now becoming a tradition by scoring a well taken goal late in the game.

That man Karl was at it again - he replaced Alex Duric in the 79th minute and with his fist touch of the ball two minutes later put the game beyond the reach of the 10 men Sydney United.

United was reduced to ten men in the 74th minute when Aytek Genc was foolishly sent off after a scuffle with Marconi's Mike Smith.

Marconi's victory places tremendous pressure on other top six aspirants, particularly Brisbane and Carlton both of whom lost on the weekend.

The first half was a very tame affair

with very little action to speak off and Krncevic's press conference retort that Marconi 'were a bit slack in the first half' was somewhat of an understatement.

The most notable incident of the early action in the first half was the injury to Di Gia who came off after 17 minutes with an adductor muscle tear.

Soon after, in the 18th minute, Buddy Farah, the proud father of his first born, a son named Bailey, came close to opening the scoring from a corner. Zoric took the corner from United's left defensive flank and Farah won the ball on the far post but his header flew just past 'keeper Steve Tolios' right post.

After a nervous start Sydney United started putting together some passes and for the rest of the first half looked the most likely team to open the scoring.

United's best players, Genc, Tom Pondeljak and Ante Moric started to combine more effectively and it was Genc and Pondeljak that combined in the 21st minute to create United's first half chance.

Genc, playing in an unaccustomed right wing back role, beat three players on the right and played a one-two with Ante Moric.

Genc returned the favour with a neat chip back to Moric inside the box - Moric chested the ball down and turned to shoot but his shot was well blocked by Smith.

Just three minutes later a combination between the three along with Zvonko Usljebrka released Genc on the right but his shot cum cross just eluded Pondeljak and was cleared.

In the 29th minute Chad Gibson was steaming in towards a Mark Babic cross when he seemed to be pushed in the back by Genc but the referee didn't see anything untoward and allowed the game to continue.



Ante Moric: still a class act in the struggling United side.

Two minutes later man of the match, Marconi sweeper Farah showed that he wanted to control the game at both ends when he headed over the bar from another corner.

Three minutes before the end of normal time in the first half United had the best chance of the half. A left foot cross from the right by Genc was deflected back

to Usljebrka in the centre of the goal, he in turn headed it back to Pondeljak who found himself in a one on one with Aceski but he took too long and 'keeper easily smothered the shot.

The first half ended, fittingly, scoreless with United having the better of the play towards the latter part and probably could count itself a bit unlucky not to have gone into the break with the lead.

Marconi showed that they meant business in the second half when Farah moved the ball forward in the first minute and unleashed a strong left foot shoot which was well saved by Aceski.

United had a couple of half chances in the 56th and 58 minutes when Genc and Moric respectively created opportunities for Pondeljak and Usljebrka but both amounted to nought.

In the last half hour Marconi came to life and dominated the game.

In the 64th minute a move on the left between Duric and Zoric released the ball to Kris Trajanovski who turned well on the near post and got off a good shot which was well saved by Tolios.

It was five minutes later that Marconi opened the scoring through McDonald. After the ball bobbed about around the United penalty box it was half cleared to Zoric standing just outside the box on the left. His cross back into the box eluded all those awaiting the ball and fell perfectly into the path of the onrushing McDonald on the far post. He timed his run perfectly and was able to collect the ball on the half volley and sweetly place it past Tolios.

Three minutes later Marconi seemed to have the game sewn up when Farah put the ball into the net after he collected it when, following a goal-mouth scramble, Smith's shot hit the post. The referee pointed to the centre circle and the Marconi team completed their celebration but the linesmen remain still holding his flag aloft until the referee noticed and came rushing over.

After some consultation the referee disallowed the goal - unclear to all at the ground whether it was for a foul on the 'keeper or for off-side.

But Marconi didn't have long to wait to score their second goal - in the 81st minute Gibson intercepted a loose ball in the midfield and ran with it at the retreating defence. He timed his release of the ball perfectly to Karl on the right instead of the more obvious Trajanovski on the left and prolific goalscorer took the ball inside the box and slipped it underneath the advancing Tolios.

Two minutes later Karl almost repeated his two goals in three minutes of a few weeks ago. A cross from the left by Smith fell invitingly for Karl just inside the six yard box but he had to stretch to get the ball between a defender and the 'keeper and in doing so mis-timed it pushing



the ball over the bar.

Krncevic was happy with the second half performance of his team and was particularly pleased for Karl. Before the game Krncevic said to the ace marksman that he would 'come off the bench and score today' and the reply was 'I know that'.

Aceski, deputising for Michael Turnbull who is in Italy for the youth tournament, was another player that pleased Krncevic.

With the return of a number of players including Brad Maloney, who was rested today after his late return from Chile, things are looking good for Marconi.

United coach Ivan Petkovic was concerned about the fitness of his team and commented: "Some players are not fit enough to play the full ninety minutes, a couple of players have not played regular-

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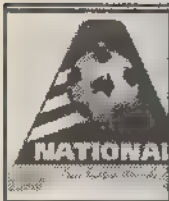
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Munro says no worries, "we'll make it."



MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 3

Silic 11, Kiratzoglou 2, Cervinski 88.

CARLTON 0

Sunday night at Knights Stadium, Melbourne. Crowd 6,211.

MATCH STATS:



MELBOURNE KNIGHTS:

John, Banini, Kovacevic, Abbas, Rahjer, Reda (Urlovic 73"), Kiratzoglou (Rados 90"), Silic (Vargas 90"), Magdic, Cervinski,

Kelic



CARLTON:

Anastasiadis, McPherson, Horvat, Anthopoulos, Martin, Marth, Terminello, Slater, Thompson, Kennedy

(Markovski 73"), Moreira (Vasilevski 57").

Yellow:

Knights: Silic 15, Kiratzoglou 26, Kelic 72.

Carlton: Marth 20, Horvat 22, Thompson 28

Reds:

Carlton: Marth 27"

Best Players:

3. SILIC (KNIGHTS)
2. Magdic (Knights)
1. Banini (Knights)

Referee: Brett Hugo

By Mark Fisher

The Knights looked like they had something to prove to their home supporters on Sunday night, in a clash the visitors were expected to win. Three goals, a huge banner with the words "Soccer on Seven - I'd Like to See That" and some dubious refereeing decisions characterised a match that from the start looked like being a tense cross-town derby.

Mark Silic showed that perhaps his best is yet to come, with a display that had the home supporters and his coach very

satisfied by the time he came off the field in the 90th minute

With a possible transfer to a Portuguese club on the cards, the Knights administration will be hoping there will be no letting up from the solidly built attacker.

Carlton, just hanging on inside the top six, went out as if their finals hopes were all hinged on this one result, and indeed they still might be.

Nevertheless, Stuart Munro mentioned after the game that despite the loss a strong finish in the run home to the end of the season was never out of the question for his team.

Indeed, he believed that with the likes of Atkinson, Douglas and Lapsansky to return, Carlton should still finish comfortably for the playoffs.

It wasn't long before the Knights started to worry Carlton's defence. Cervinski found space to the right of the box in the 9th minute, but Steve Martin closed him down with a sharp tackle and sent Carlton away.

Just two minutes later however Silic found some space of his own in the centre, and smashed the ball from 25 metres out into the upper right corner of the net, giving Anastasiadis not a skerrick of a chance of saving the shot.

A great goal to have the home side up 1-0 after only 11 minutes.

Andrew Marth was playing pugnaciously in the centre, and he received his first caution in the fifteenth minute for some robust body-work on Murtala Abbas.

When Steve Horvat received a yellow seven minutes later, it looked as though referee Brett Hugo was in one of those moods again.

Sure enough, he ended up giving a second yellow to Marth for supposedly diving in the area, when Marth looked to have been clearly tripped up by Adrian Cervinski. His remonstrations were in vain however, as Hugo waved him off.

The decision was an appalling one, and only further highlighted the crisis that appears to be gripping refereeing standards at NSL level this season.



The Knights' second goal could be put down to sloppy keeping on the part of Anastasiadis.

Two minutes before Marth's send-off, Magdic sent a ball across goal that the Blues' custodian should have claimed, yet Kiratzoglou was free to tap in from close range.

Carlton didn't completely go into a shell for the remainder of the match, and showed some determination in the second half to try and peg a goal back.

Their best chance came when Thompson headed just over the bar from a good looping ball from Terminello on the right. Yet with only ten men on the park, and without their usual cohesion in the middle, the Knights were free to counter-attack almost at will.

They did so with success in the 88th minute, when Magdic sent a perfect cross for Cervinski to net past a beaten Anastasiadis.

It was a clinical way to finish the game for the Knights, and it was a victory that had been brewing for a while after some encouraging recent results.

Banini throughout the match was as solid as a rock, managing to rise with Carlton's forward line whenever they chipped the ball into the area.

Horvat managed to play the entire game in the Blue shirt, and did a reasonable job under the circumstances. But perhaps only Archie Thompson could have felt satisfied with his efforts for Carlton, as he used pace and determination to at least keep a little bit of pressure on the back three of Abbas, Kovacevic and Banini.

Carlton coach Stuart Munro was forthcoming about the poor refereeing decisions that marred the match. He also made reference to the fact that it was Hugo who sent off Lupo Lapsansky in a previous match for the very same reason Marth was ejected.

"It (the refereeing) was an absolute nightmare - we keep on about it and we keep talking about it, but it's the truth here".

Nevertheless, he did suggest that the Knights worked hard to earn three points. "Don't get me wrong, the Melbourne Knights deserved their victory today. We never competed as well as them, and even with ten men we should have done a lot better than we did today".

Munro alluded to his strikers' inability to find the net, even though they appeared to be trying to make the most of all available opportunities.

The only consolation to emerge from the round for Carlton is that they still remain in the top six, just ahead of the Brisbane Strikers, by one competition point.

As expected, Vlado Vanis was upbeat about defeating a team who he rated mid-week as the best in the league. He felt though that it was time his side had a convincing win at home.

"Today we made four chances and we scored from three of them, so I can't ask for more"

He was pleased with the performance of Mark Silic, who he believed "pulled his socks up" after an incident weeks earlier when he and Michael Reda had a tense stand-off in the team dressing room.

He tempered his praise of the midfielder with this statement however: "A player like Silic could make it overseas only if he remains 100% fit, 100% ready and 100% prepared to concentrate on the job (ahead of him)".

The Knights will play South Melbourne in their next home match, and the club is still expecting English legend Peter Beardsley to be a part of it.

However, judging from the home crowd's indifferent reaction to the announcement, one cannot expect the Somers Street turnstiles to increase their takings by any significant amount, one would have to say.



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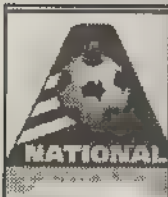
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Breakers on top of NSL by this Friday?



FOOTBALL KINGZ 0 NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 1

Wilson 67

Saturday afternoon at WestpacTrust Stadium, Wellington. Crowd 6,500.

MATCH STATS:



FOOTBALL KINGZ:
Utting, Bunce (Rufer, 78),
Osman, Van Steeden,
Perry, Jackson, Ngata,
Vichelich, Stergiopoulos
(Suri, 46); de Jong, Silva
(Elrick, 46).



**NEWCASTLE
BREAKERS:** Catlin;
Dodd, McManus, Pryce,
Sprod, Owens, Moore
(Trpcevski, 13)
(Tancheski, 83), Wilson.
(Roberts, 78); Harper,
Buonavoglia.

Yellows:

Kingz: Bunce (30)
Breakers: Wilson (74)

Best Players:

3. VICELICH (KINGZ)
2. Harper (Newcastle)
1. Osman (Kingz)

Referee: Jeremy Blaney

By Jeremy Ruane

The Football Kingz hopes of recording a top six finish in their inaugural National Soccer League season suffered a setback at the six-week-old WestpacTrust Stadium in Wellington on February 19, as Newcastle Breakers recorded a 1-0 victory over their trans-tasman neighbours to climb to second place on the table.

Playing in front of a 6,500-strong crowd, the Kingz were keen to continue their unbeaten run on home turf this century. Indeed, their last defeat on New Zealand soil took place on the last occasion they played away from their usual home ground of North Harbour Stadium, Wollongong Wolves inflicting a 4-2 defeat on the local side on November 13 at Chnstchurch's Jade Stadium.

Lightning struck twice, however, much to the delight of Newcastle's captain, Shane Pryce.

"We came here with a job to do", he said "and while we didn't play as well as we have done this season, we didn't play any stupid soccer either, and have come away with three points which have hopefully cemented our own top six spot."

The first half was a somewhat cagey affair, sorely lacking in creativity in the final third of each half of a pitch which players had great difficulty keeping their footing on - one of the drawbacks of playing soccer on an arena with a cricket block slap bang in the middle of it!

Indeed, the only shot on target in the entire first forty-five minutes came from the boot of the ever-willing Andy Harper, the shaven-headed striker's fourth minute effort almost catching Michael Utting

under the bar.

The equally shaven-headed goalkeeper quickly covered the acutely-angled shot, however, averting the threat in the



process.

The Kingz willingness to knock the ball around confidently as they patiently awaited an opening almost paid dividends in the tenth minute. Fred de Jong released Jonathan Perry down the right with a fine pass, and the wing-back swept past three opponents before whipping in a low cross which had the experienced Bob Catlin beaten all ends up.

Aaron Silva was unable to capitalise, however, the retreating Todd McManus using the experience he has acquired in one hundred NSL games to good effect to thwart his smaller opponent on this occasion.

Neither side made much headway in the next twenty-five minutes, as defences dominated proceedings. Levent Osman and McManus were the dominant defenders during this spell, with the lively Greg Owens appearing to be the one player through whom the deadlock might be broken before the interval.

Another who was impressive during this period, and throughout the second half, was Ivan Vichelich. It was he who came closest to opening the scoring with a buccaneering run in the 35th minute fully deserving of better reward than that which befell it. Che Bunce and Silva combined to good effect, allowing Vichelich the chance to take on the Breakers' rearguard.

A splendid display of dribbling at close quarters saw the All White weave past five challenges, before Mark Wilson was able to break the spell Vichelich had cast on the Newcastle defence with a hefty clearance.

This prompted Newcastle to up the tempo a little before the break, and efforts from Dodd and John Buonavoglia, who was making his fiftieth appearance for the team, whistled wide of Utting's goal, while those of Harper and Pryce were scrambled clear following Vasko Trpcevski's 41st minute corner.

The introduction of Solomon Islands international Batram Suri and evergreen All White Mark Elrick added some much-needed zest and zing to the game in the second half, and a much more lively encounter ensued.

Suri, in particular, did much to enliv-

en proceedings with his darting runs at pace, while he was narrowly astray with a thumping first-time volley in the 53rd minute, following a Perry free-kick from deep.

Trpcevski and Chris Jackson exchanged long-range shots on goal soon after, before the Breakers broke the hearts of the hometown faithful with what proved to be the winning goal in the 64th minute.

The quality of the Kingz passing during this match at times left a lot to be desired, and it was from such a stray pass, ironically from Osman, one of the team's better players on the day, that the goal was conceived.

Travis Dodd quickly sent the ball forward to Buonavoglia, who was well marshalled by Riki Van Steeden on this occasion.

The ball fell to McManus, who whipped in a low cross looking for Mark Wilson. The efforts of Utting initially denied the midfielder, but the ball ricocheted off Bunce back into the path of the by now prone number eight, who reacted quickly to prod the ball home in the shadows of the post.

This rocked the Kingz, Utting particularly, with the goalkeeper seemingly all at sea in the next ten minutes. A smashing Buonavoglia volley left him beaten all ends up in the 68th minute, while Newcastle were unable to capitalise on the 'keeper's hesitancy three minutes later, as Glenn Sprod sent in a searching cross from the left flank.

The Kingz responded with a stunning counter-attack, sparked by Suri and continued in style by Vichelich. His precise crossfield pass picked out Elrick, who had two defenders and the otherwise untroubled Catlin to find a way past in the 72nd minute.

He did with a gem of a shot, a twenty-five yard curler, struck with the outside of the right foot, which left all and sundry beaten all ends up.

Sadly for the Kingz, the ball cannoned back into play off Catlin's right-hand post - it deserved better.

This gave the home side renewed hope, and they were further buoyed on by Newcastle's seeming willingness to sit on their lead and let the Kingz attack at will.

Forward they charged, Elrick going close with a thirty-yard free-kick in the 75th minute.

The introduction of player-coach Wynton Rufer added further impetus to the home team's attacks, with Suri just failing to capitalise on a chance resulting from Rufer's first touch in the 79th minute.

And in stoppage time, de Jong cracked a twenty-yarder narrowly wide, moments after Chris Tancheski had fired a similar effort past Utting's left-hand post as the Kingz onslaught momentarily relented.

But 1-0 to Newcastle it remained, much to the disappointment of Kingz captain, Harry Ngata.

"Too many players didn't per-



must be alerting 'Australian-based' clubs.

form as well as they could today, and those that did just couldn't carry the day for us. We knew what we had to do, but we certainly didn't help ourselves, and as a result, Newcastle emerged the better side on the day."

SITTER!

The New Zealand soccer magazine



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INSIDE JUNIOR SOCCER



BREAKERS IN LUCKY WIN OVER AIS



Richard Beazley saw the AIS suffer a rare home loss in going down to the Newcastle Colts side in their Youth League match at the AIS on Saturday evening.

In a result similar to the Cosmos-Power match the previous evening only a stones throw away at Bruce Stadium, a 2nd minute goal to Newcastle striker Andrew Blanning was enough to see the visitors take the three points on offer. However, it was scored through an ounce of luck which saw a relatively weak shot covered by AIS goalkeeper Andrew Carman only going over the line courtesy of a lucky ricochet off the right hand upright.

The remainder of the match saw the AIS team dominate, but unable to convert their chances, especially from striker Mark Tsiorlas who had several clear opportunities to score.

For Newcastle, they were limited to only two forays into the AIS area, one shot wide with only the goalkeeper to beat in the remaining 88 minutes of the match.

The AIS now back up for a double header next weekend with matches against

Newcastle in Newcastle on Friday evening followed by the Queensland Academy of Sport at the AIS on Sunday.

AIS: Carman, Sekulovski, Mailor, Fay, Pantelidis, Talevski (Pace), Wells, Rainey, Johnson, Parsi, Tsiorlas (Saric).

Newcastle: Anwar, Davelaar, Dee, Fleming, Ferguson, Juchniewicz, Hughes, Pryce (Provost), Blanning (Jones), Wheeler, Haynes (Hannah).

Chris Dunkerley was at Christie Park to see whether Newcastle Breakers youth team could keep their finals hopes alive against the talented Northern Spirit Colts.

The evening had cooled as the Spirit Colts took the game to their older opponents for the first 30 minutes with the best chances going to former Breaker John Majurovski whose header from the right got past Brad Swancott but also the far post, and Adrian Martino who saw his strike palmed wide by the Breakers custodian.

The Breakers had some chances too with Murray Nelson, given his 7th game of the season, diving well to intercept a Heath Simpson cross which threatened to find a Breakers player and also getting well behind a shot on the turn from Kurt O'Brien.

The Breakers were getting on top but wasting possession with poor final passes until in the 33rd minute when Tomich received one in the area and turning two defenders he slotted the ball between Nelson and the left post. (Luke was doing an Andy Harper imitation - shaved head but not alas playing standard.)

This lapse in concentration by the Colts defence was repeated two minutes later when Tomich found Robbie Angievski wide and free on the right and he repeated his last effort against a Spirit team by lobbing the keeper.

After another chance at 39mins, when Kurt O'Brien swivelled and shot at Nelson, the Breakers seemed to slip into slow motion, or was it the sustained pressure that the Spirit Colts applied so well.

This pressure was carried right through the second half as the game deteriorated to a mid-field slog. Cards then flowed regularly culminating in a clash between Heath Simpson and Spirit sub Matthew Sutton. Both were shown the red, Sutton for the second time this season.

Not a game for the fans, but generally I suppose Newcastle did enough for the points but not to suggest that a top four spot is certain whilst the Spirit youngsters showed battling spirit but they need to watch their temperament.

Spirit Colts: Nelson, Watkins, Jones, Arrarte, Wilkinson, Saginian, Monteleone (Sutton), Berbis, Foti, Martino (Talevski), Majurovski.

Breakers Youth: Swancott, Gazzard, Nicholso, Smith, Kemp, Simpson, O'Brien (Cook), Bennis, Ross, Angievski, Tomich (Geoff).

Chris Conti reports that on a beautiful Summer's night at Bruce Stadium last Friday, the Parramatta Youth team proved to be too powerful for the young ACT Academy of Sport team.

The strength and speed up front of Danny Townsend, Lachlan Campbell and John Angelucci proved to be too great a test, and despite heroic keeping from Tony Giannasca, the Power scored three times during the game.

In addition to these three first-team players up front, Parramatta played Joe Vrkic in the centre of defence and his experience made it difficult for ACTAS' inform strikers, Daniel Aliffi and Paul Ivanic, to engineer worthwhile chances.

ACTAS began with Cosmos' Nick Mrdja and Micheal Musitano, so there were quite a few 'old' heads on the park, and both Tommy Sermanni (Cosmos) and David Mitchell (Power) were interested observers.

Mitchell must have been impressed with his four players, and after the Cosmos win later in the evening, his journey home may well have been taken up with working out how to fit them back into his first team.

Musitano (returning from injury) and Mrdja lasted an hour and both made a number of dangerous runs at the Power defence which came to nothing.

Giannasca in the ACTAS goal gave his usual consistent display with many saves straight out of the top drawer.

The Power custodian, Liam Reddy, who was at the AIS last year, made a number of saves which suggested that he could develop into a top class keeper. In the final fifteen minutes he made three important stops, by using excellent positioning and handling.

The first twenty-five minutes of the game was very even, but a defensive lapse on the left saw Townsend pounce, send over a wicked cross which although Giannasca amazingly parried, Angelucci rose to head the ball in the net. Four minutes later, the ACTAS defence were slow to mark up on the right and Angelucci this time set up Campbell. In the second half Angelucci and Townsend combined to give substitute Brendan Santalab an easy tap in.

In between Musitano had a number of good attempts which were either well saved by Reddy or were just wide, and in one flowing move Aliffi went close. ACTAS continued to play good football but could not get a goal back and on this evening Parramatta Power took the points and remain top of the NYL.

It will take a determined and committed display by other teams to knock them off the top.

ACTAS: Giannasca, La Butte, Yamold (Guzman), La Butte, Morgan, Kemp (capt), Williams, Mrdja (Anstey), Aliffi, Musitano (Ivanic) Valeri.

Parramatta Power: Reddy, Dixon, Kelso, Vrkic, Gatt (Santalab), Perengle, Downs (Wright), Townsend, Campbell, Angelucci, Thompson (Cabrera).

Best Players:

ACTAS: Kemp, Giannasca, Williams.

Power: Vrkic, Angelucci, Townsend.

By Roy Hay

Bulleen Inter lost its chance to go to clear second on the Southern Division ladder when it lost to Melbourne Knights by the only goal of the game at Knights Stadium on Sunday.

The Knights got off to a flying start with a goal inside three minutes from the league's leading scorer Anthony Pelikan, who now has 13 for the season in only 12 games.

Chris Tabak came racing down the left and his pin-point cross was put away by Pelikan. Tabak kept up his wing runs until substituted late in the game and Ivan Gelemanovic held the Knights defence together, assisted by Mark Paleka.

For Bulleen Xhezair Sulemani and Paul Presti were the pick of the players. The match became quite defensive on the part of the Knights after they scored, but Bulleen kept them honest for the rest of the game. Miro Kustera reports that "It was not pretty to watch but it was a really competitive game".

Melbourne Knights Academy also recorded a win by two goals to one away to Fawkner last Wednesday.

Robert Senes scored after 12 minutes for the Blues and it took the Academy until the 41st minute to get on terms through Alan Paleka. Andrej Majer scored what proved to be the winner in 62 minutes and the Academy held on despite some serious Fawkner pressure.

South Dandenong had a good three-one win at home to Albury Wodonga. Festum Zekiri opened for South Dandenong in 21 minutes and Victor Memeti made it two just before the interval.

Thereafter Qemal Korcarevski got a goal on the hour, but Albury Wodonga refused to give up and David Martin got a deserved goal in 78 minutes.

South Melbourne travelled to the Latrobe Valley to beat Gippsland Falcons by three goals to nil.

It was a couple of experienced players who did the damage, Anthony Magnacca scoring twice and Jim Tsakinis getting the other. Magnacca's two goals came in the third and seventeenth minutes which more or less settled the

Carlton, who played their round 12 game against the VIS last week, remains undefeated and leads the pack by six points in front of the Institute.

Bulleen Kings, the surprise team of the season, remain in third spot in front of the more fancied teams such as South Melbourne and Melbourne Knights.

SOUTHERN DIVISION NYL

Fawkner Blues 1 Senes	Knights Acad. 2 Paleka, Majer
South Dandenong 3 Memeti Zekiri Martin	Albury Wodonga 1 Korcarevski
Gippsland Falcons 0	South Melbourne 3 Magnacca 2, Tsakinis
Melbourne Knights 1 Pelikan	Bulleen Inter 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Carlton	12	10	2	0	48	7	32
VIS	12	8	1	3	32	10	28
Bulleen Inter Kings	13	8	1	4	38	22	25
Melbourne Knights	12	8	2	4	35	24	20
South Melbourne	11	8	0	5	29	12	18
South Dandenong	12	6	3	4	18	21	18
Gippsland Falcons	11	4	3	4	17	24	15
Fawkner Blues	12	3	3	6	13	26	12
Melb. Knights Academy	10	3	0	7	9	18	9
Albury Wodonga	13	2	2	9	16	48	8
Preston Lions	12	1	1	10	11	65	4

NORTHERN DIVISION NYL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Parramatta Power	21	16	3	1	2	61	51
Northern Spirit	20	14	3	1	3	82	45
Sydney Olympic	20	13	3	2	4	56	42
Q.A.S.	19	12	1	2	6	53	37
Newcastle Breakers	20	12	1	1	6	37	37
Marconi Stallions	18	12	0	1	6	50	36
A.I.S.	19	11	2	1	6	59	35
Wollongong Wolves	21	10	2	1	9	31	32
Sydney United	18	9	1	1	8	29	28
A.C.T.A.S.	20	7	6	2	7	30	27
N castle Colts	22	8	2	1	12	34	26
Olympic Academy	20	8	1	2	11	40	25
N.S.W.I.S.	19	5	3	2	11	31	18
Marconi Colts	21	4	4	1	13	31	16
Northern Spirit Colts	21	4	3	1	14	21	15
Sydney United Colts	19	3	3	2	13	22	12
Wollongong Colts	18	0	2	1	16	9	2

ROUND 22

N.A.C.T.A.S.	0	Parramatta Power	3
		Angelucci 24', Campbell 29', B Santalab 74'	
Sydney United Colts	6	Wollongong Colts	0
Bastac 7', 60', 85', Bazdaric 34', Mrdjen 67', 80'			
Northern Spirit	4	N.S.W.I.S.	3
R Griffiths 11', 75', Monie 52', Snyder 71'		Holman 18', 85', Carney 58'	
Northern Spirit Colts	0	Newcastle Breakers	2
Tomich 32', Angievski 34'			
A.I.S.	0	Newcastle Colts	1
		Blanning 2'	
Wollongong Wolves	2	Sydney Olympic	1
Spencer 82', Dimitrievski 84'		Tome 69'	
Sydney Olympic Acad.	2	Marconi Colts	4
(Cevenini 11', Sabuncuoglu 42' Junior 2', Brosque 17', 83', Sandoval 67')			
Marconi Stallions v Sydney United			
(Match postponed)			

Scott O'Donell: set for a return to Oz?

In this issue of Inside Soccer we have begun a section within the Aussies on the World Stage (page eight) devoted to those local players who have gone to play in Asian leagues.

One such player is former Parramatta Eagles player Scott O'Donell.

O'Donell will not only keep us informed on the progress of players but is keen on a coaching career.

He explained his background.

"I started my National Coaching Licence in Jan. 1988 down at the AIS. It was a pretty intensive course," he recalled, "with the vast majority of participants being former and current NSL players such as Frank Farina, David Mitchell, Andy Harper, David Lowe, Bert Mariani to name just a few."

"Over the next 24 months I had to complete a number of practicals as well as assignments."

"I was lucky that my coach at the time was former Canberra coach, Mike Lyons, so he more or less made me

his assistant coach.

"He gave me quite a lot of responsibility, and gave me plenty of opportunities to train the team."

"As for my career here in Singapore, last year I went back to my old club, Tampines Rovers."

"This year I am working with Fila to set up a soccer school for young kids in Singapore."

"We hope to get it up and running by next month."

"Ideally, I would like to be coaching senior teams, but until the right opportunity presents itself, I'll keep on working with the kids."

"I would love to come back to Australia and coach or even play/coach in the NSW Super League, and then maybe progress onto the NSL."

Scott O'Donell can be contacted on Tel/Fax: 65 243 4496

Tricky injury but Joe to return soon

By Anita Bulan

Maybe Carlton took a risk when they signed Joe Tricarico in 98/99? The young striker was notorious for recurring hamstring injuries, yet after only one season he was the leading vote getter in the Supporters' Player of the Year award, and claimed "this was the best start to an NSL season I have ever had."

"Everything was looking good, the best in my four years in the NSL. I was getting good remarks from the crowd, everything was positive, things were even looking good for overseas," he recalls.

However, mid-November against Adelaide saw Tricarico suffer the worst injury of his five year NSL career - he tore the hamstring muscle off his tendon, and the tendon off the bone.

At the time, no-one was to know that this act of contortionism would result in Tricarico (pictured) being sidelined for almost 24 weeks.

"My legs went down, and the top half of my body went up, so it was a huge impact."

"I had an operation straight after the injury. They have put a screw into my leg to hold the little bit of bone that broke off. The surgeon said it was an injury I had to have," he explained.

Interestingly, it was only after he came to Carlton from Gippsland that physiotherapists finally figured out what was causing all of the 23-year-old player's problems.

"When I found out what had happened, and what I had to do to get back into things, I was pretty devastated," he said.

In the meantime, time has passed since that match. Tricarico has since begun full time training again, following constant rehabilitation, and exercise sessions at the pool, gym and on the bike.

Enjoying a summer afternoon on Lygon Street with fellow team and housemate Josh Kennedy, Tricarico was positive in his outlook on the remainder of the season.



son

"The tendon has joined to the muscle better than before. The bone is back on and it's strong. Basically my surgeon said he didn't want to see me again, which is good news for me," he explained.

Adamant he will play in the remainder of the season, Tricarico said, "I will play. I should be back in about four weeks. It's just a matter of time before I get fit, and obviously find my place back in the team."

Anticipating a respectable result come the end of the season, he mentions the fact that himself and Simon Colosimo return from injury at about the same time, as do a few others.

"I think we have a very good chance at the premiership, to be honest. We're a lot better than most teams out there," he said.

Obviously Carlton knew what they wanted when they signed Joe Tricarico. He is reassured that there is the best to come from 'Tricky'.

"My body is getting stronger than ever. I have never felt this good."

'A Spirited Season'

And we have 5 copies to give away!



A Spirited Season is a new book on Northern Spirit's inaugural NSL year

readers' forum

Lets go through some of Soccer Australia's recent achievements to improve and expand the game in Australia.

Did not release a fixture list for 99/00 season until about five weeks to the season commencing.

Introduced two extra teams, Power and Kingz this season, stating the two sides would attract between 15,000 to 20,000 supporters to their home games. Surprise, surprise, to Power's last home game a grand total of 2,262 attended the match.

The Kingz' average home gate is under 4,000. The Kingz were given the licence for five years, but only five months into their existence they can't afford to pay their players, and may disappear at the end of the season.

Carlton, who made the Grand Final in their first year have never attracted many fans, and this year although in the top four, average home gate is under 3,000.

Even the jewel in the crown Perth have seen their attendances drop to under

10,000 for their last two home games compared to an average last year of 15,000.

Selling the TV rights to Channel 7 long-term for short-term financial gain. Any clown could have told you, they would buy the rights just to bury the Soccer coverage.

Now for the latest grand new scheme of two divisions, 22 teams, the country can't support 16 teams now, who will support the two divisions?

Certainly not Soccer Australia.

What have SA done in recent years in marketing the game. A big fat zero! The organisation is in the red and can't even administer the game, let alone promote it.

Is it any wonder why crowds and interest in the NSL is at an all time low? Maybe it's time Scarsella and his mates give up trying to run the NSL into the ground.

As we go into another new week we await for Soccer Australia's next brilliant contribution to killing the game at the national level.

Peter Bosi, Adelaide

To get your hands on 'A Spirited Season' answer the question below, cut out this ad and send to Inside Soccer: PO Box 3889 Parramatta NSW 2124. No photocopies accepted but you can send us as many entries as you like. Competition will be drawn on March 13 with the winners announced in March 14 issue. First five correct answers win.

Question: Which Spirit player left this season to join Molde in Norway?

Answer:

Name:

Address:

RAMS FAIL TO FIRE AT HOME

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS 3

J Bennett 57, S Riches 88, Hagger 90

MACARTHUR RAMS 1

C Bishop 59

Saturday night at Lynwood Park, Sydney.



contained his joy as the ball fell to his feet allowing him to stab home from close range

The Demons nabbed their third on the stroke of full-time with

Mark Hagger pouncing on a clinical pass from Brown to slam the ball home from eight metres out

Blacktown City Demons: Greco, Foxe, Lowe, Yates, Riches, Langan (Hagger 77), Bradley, Sermanni, Brown, Bennett, Ima

Macarthur Rams: Munsie, Goodfellow, Willard, Bourke, O'Shea, McDonald (McAusland 77), Cummings, Bishop, Judge, Newall, Williams.

Yellows.

Blacktown: Foxe 64.

Macarthur: Bourke 70

Best Players:

Blacktown: Greco, Sermanni, Foxe.

It was a weekend for visitors with five of the seven games going to the away side. The most significant was Bankstown's win against the

previously undefeated Leichhardt. Goce Trposki and Nabil Codmani were the men on target for Bankstown

Penrith struggled to contain Fairfield at Andrews Road, leading from a 14th minute strike by Sandro Borsato, but despite the Bulls having George Zabetakis sent off they came home strongly to win 2-1 with Marc Hoenselaars and Mathew Borg on target for Joe Watson's side

Manly Warringah were beaten by two late goals for Eastern Suburbs in a 2-1 loss at Cromer Park. It was Easts' second win on the trot and lifts them away from the bottom for the first time this season

To complete the away team victors, the out of form Parramatta bounced back to record a vital 4-0 win over another home team in Canterbury Marrickville.

Home team victors were Bonnyrigg against another previously unbeaten side, Central Coast. Colin Luff celebrated his return to Super League with a hat trick while Johnny Ghiso scored one himself, and also turned provider, while Coasties' captain Peter Preston put away a penalty for the visitors - the final score, 4-1 to Bonnyrigg

Steve Karavatakis still leads the scoring charts with seven, followed by Johnny Ghiso on six and Jim Bakis on five.

FIRST GRADE: SUPER LEAGUE

ST GEORGE 5

M Brennan 11m, A Petratos 14m, J Bakis 61m, E Augerinos 70/81m

SUTHERLAND SHARKS 0

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES 4

C Luff 25, 54, 79m, Ghiso

CENTRAL COAST COASTIES 1

P Preston 70m

MACARTHUR RAMS 1

C Bishop 59m

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS 3

J Bennett 57m, S Riches 88m, M Hagger 90m

PENRITH PANTHERS 1

S Borsato 14m

FAIRFIELD BULLS 2

M Hoenselaars 44m, Zabetakis 60m

MANLY WARRINGAH DOLPHINS 1

S Hickman 77m

EASTERN SUBURBS 2

J. Pillemer 11m, J Aschner 90m

LEICHHARDT TIGERS 1

J Bruni 75m

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS 2

G Trposki 46m, T Joseski 60m.

CANTEBURY MARRICKVILLE 0

PARRAMATTA EAGLES 4

Anderson 22m, Joseski 44m,

Revsley 60m, Trposki 87m

UNDER 21:

St George 3

Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0

Macarthur Rams 1

Penrith Panthers 2

Manly Warringah Dolphins 0

Leichhardt Tigers 1

Canterbury Marrickville 0

Sutherland Sharks 0

Central Coast 1

Blacktown City 5

Fairfield Bulls 0

Eastern Suburbs 3

Bankstown City Lions 4

Parramatta Eagles 2

UNDER 18:

St George 1

Bonnyrigg White Eagles 3

Macarthur Rams 1

Penrith Panthers 0

Manly Warringah Dolphins 0

Sutherland Sharks 1

Central Coast 1

Blacktown City 2

Fairfield Bulls 1

Eastern Suburbs 1

Super League Tables

FIRST GRADE:

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
LEICHHARDT TIGERS	7	5	1	1	19	11	16	8
Central Coast Coasties	7	4	2	1	15	8	14	7
Blacktown City Demons	7	4	1	2	18	7	13	11
St George Saints	7	4	1	2	14	8	13	6
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	7	4	0	3	19	15	12	4
Bankstown City Lions	7	3	3	1	11	11	12	0
Canterbury Marrickville	7	4	0	3	14	15	12	-1
Parramatta Eagles	7	2	3	2	15	13	9	2
Fairfield Bulls	7	2	2	3	10	12	8	-2
Macarthur Rams	7	1	3	3	10	12	6	-2
Manly Warringah Dolphins	7	1	3	3	9	12	6	-3
Eastern Suburbs	7	2	0	5	8	13	6	-5
Sutherland Sharks	7	2	0	5	9	22	6	-13
Penrith Panthers	7	1	1	5	5	21	4	-16

UNDER 21

CENTRAL COAST	7	5	1	1	9	5	16	4
Blacktown City Demons	7	4	2	1	14	9	14	5
Leichhardt Tigers	7	4	1	2	15	11	13	4
Parramatta Eagles	7	4	1	2	13	9	13	4
Penrith Panthers	7	4	0	3	15	12	12	3
St George Saints	7	2	3	2	11	7	9	4
Manly Warringah Dolphins	7	3	0	4	13	13	9	0
Eastern Suburbs	7	2	3	2	12	12	9	0
Canterbury Marrickville	7	3	0	4	14	15	9	-1
Macarthur Rams	7	3	0	4	8	16	9	-8
Fairfield Bulls	7	2	2	3	11	12	8	-1
Sutherland Sharks	7	2	2	3	10	16	8	-6
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	7	1	2	4	6	11	5	-5
Bankstown City Lions	7	1	1	5	10	13	4	-3

UNDER 18

LEICHHARDT TIGERS	7	5	2	0	21	9	17	12
Blacktown City Demons	7	5	2	0	12	4	17	8
Parramatta Eagles	7	5	1	1	19	5	16	14
Fairfield Bulls	7	5	0	2	13	9	15	4
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	7	3	2	2	11	6	11	5
Macarthur Rams	7	3	2	2	8	6	11	2
Eastern Suburbs	7	2	3	2	10	13	9	-3
Sutherland Sharks	7	2	2	3	11	9	8	2
Central Coast Coasties	7	2	2	3	14	14	8	0
Bankstown City Lions	7	2	2	3	8	15	8	-7
St George Saints	7	1	2	4	6	21	5	-15
Penrith Panthers	7	0	4	3	5	9	4	-4
Manly Warringah Dolphins	7	1	0	6	6	12	3	-6

SUPER LEAGUE



ROUND EIGHT

Saturday 26 February

Sutherland v Bonnyrigg - Seymour Shaw Park

Central Coast Macarthur Rams - Plum Park

Blacktown City v Canterbury M'ville - Gabbie Stadium

Parramatta Eagles v Leichhardt Tigers - Melita Stadium

Eastern Suburbs v Penrith Panthers - David Phillips Field

Sunday 27 February

Bankstown Lions v Manly Warringah - Jensen Park

Games 6.00pm (1st grade)-4.00pm (21s)

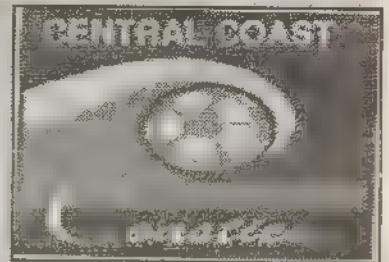
Fairfield Bulls v St George - Nineveh Field

Games 7.00pm (1st grade)-5.00pm (21s)-3.00pm (18s) unless otherwise stated.

Catch all the latest news on football in NSW in **Super Soccer OUT** 24 February!

www.soccernsw.com.au

Coasting! Central Coast Soccer booming



The NSW Super League is arguably the most senior competition in the country outside of the NSL.

Why then is a team of 'no-name' players (well maybe a couple) from the Central Coast, undefeated going into last weekend's round and running a close second in that competition, has made the high profile clubs from the city sit up and take notice?

The Coast, in four years at the Super League level, has always been considered 'also-rans' and last season narrowly avoided being eligible for relegation.

The team includes 'fortysomething' years old ex-Australian and Sydney Olympic goalkeeper Gary Meier, still playing as good as ever.

1999 Super League 'player of the year', Peter Preston, and midfielder Peter Ritchie (pictured) who formerly played at boom NSL club Newcastle Breakers are also in the Coast's ranks.

The remaining players are Coasties youth players or from the local central association or Newcastle clubs.

To remedy the situation a complete change of direction decided on by the clubs board of directors at the end of last year has taken place.

A new coaching panel of three was appointed to manage the first grade and under 21 teams (which is also running second in its competition).

The club appointed Dale Eggleton

and Andrew Ollier, both former Coasties players, and former Soccerroo goalkeeper Terry Greedy to revamp the club's playing staff and approach to matches.

Young players such as Stuart Sontag, Nathan Byrn, Brent Demert, Arron Binekin and Wes Bennett, have come through the Coasties juniors.

They were reunited with former Coasties favourites Paul Roberts and Shane Knight who both rejoined the club this year.

Shaun Matthew, Adam Peaty, Brett Jagar and Ryan Marshall decided the club was at last going in the right direction and were duly signed up.

Two of last year's stalwarts, Mark Drysdale and Marcus Steele, also resigned and the squad of players with varying experience and ability was formed.

The players have been allowed to express their natural talents and during trial matches showed that they would be more than competitive, yet nobody expected that after six rounds of the competition they would be undefeated (including trial games), and sitting in second position in the Super League going into this weekend.

And this after playing their first five matches away from home.

There is a feeling of 'mateship' among the players and the hard working club officials that has not been seen for many years.

The club went through a troubled

period when their relationship with the local Central Coast Soccer Association and a number of local clubs was far from amicable.

With a complete new management and a professional attitude now shown by the association, the relationship with that organization could not be better, and it is showing throughout the soccer fraternity in the Central Coast, and especially the performances of the Coasties.

With the remarkable success of 'sister' club Newcastle Breakers in the NSL, soccer in the Central Coast-Newcastle region has never had it so good.

Both clubs recently elected new management and got together to exchange ideas and discuss the futures.

These meetings have proved to be beneficial to both clubs and has put soccer on the map in both districts.

In this day and age there is a lesson for others in Australian soccer, don't you think?



Former E



ST GEORGE 5

Brennan 11, Petratos 14, Bakis 59, 80, Augerinos 71.

SUTHERLAND SHARKS 0

Saturday night at St George Stadium, Sydney.



By Ben Cubby

St. George inflicted a punishing 5-0 defeat upon the hapless Sutherland Sharks in the southern Sydney derby on Saturday night in their NSW Super League round seven clash.

St. George dominated the match from start to finish, confirming that they are a potent new addition to Super League this season.

Sutherland were hesitant in defence and aimless in attack at a windswept St. George Stadium.

Saints marksman Stefan Janic wasted two golden opportunities to put his team ahead early on, before Mark Brennan made it third time lucky with a rising, wind-assisted drive that deflected into the Sharks net.

In the 14th minute, St. George's Achilles Markopoulos tried his luck with another long range effort.

Sutherland keeper Dennis Olla parried the shot but couldn't hold on to it, and Angelo Petratos helped the ball over the line with an ostentatious diving header

shelled by Brennan and Elias Augerinos.

This pair, along with the busy Maxi Sevaras, controlled the tempo of the game, denying Sutherland possession and creating a number of chances for their forward men.

The Sutherland strike duo of Ali Salim and Craig Hobbs looked quick and tricky at times, but they seemed to lack the killer instinct in front of goal that the Saints displayed on this occasion.

The second half began as briskly as the first and for a while it seemed that Sutherland, with the gale now behind them, might have been able to stage a comeback.

The nippy Jim Bakis quashed their hopes in the 59th minute, when he challenged Olla for a backpass, rounded him and tapped the ball into an empty net.

With the game now in the bag, the Saints began to toy with their demoralised opponents.

An intricate pattern of passes ended with Augerinos stabbing home a well-deserved goal in the 70th.

Sutherland kept on trying, but they really had no answer to the slick, some-

times majestic, play of Brennan and co. on the night.

In the 79th minute, substitute George Maglis ran onto a brilliant through-ball from Augerinos and was brought down on the edge of the Sharks' penalty box.

Sutherland managed to fend away the resulting free kick, but another shot was driven in immediately and Grant McDonald deliberately handled the ball on the goal line.

Referee Nick Asargiotis produced the inevitable red card and Bakis stepped up to knock in his sixth goal of the season from the penalty spot.

The big win leaves St. George sitting in a comfortable position on the league ladder, tucked in just behind leaders Leichhardt and the Central Coast - both of whom failed to pick up points this weekend.

Their free-flowing style - similar to that of Sydney Olympic, where many of the St. George players have plied their trade - has already brought a number of more fancied opponents to their knees.

Younger players like Bakis, Matt Galea and Bill Petrovski did well in this match and are learning fast from the experienced heads around them.

Sutherland is now left with six points from seven games and the team is slipping back into familiar territory near the foot of the table.

With a squad based largely on local products, the Sharks won't be setting Super League on fire this season,

although they did enough against St. George to suggest that, with a regular goalscorer, they won't be easybeats.

Club captain David Tedesco stood out in this match with a committed display in his defensive role.

In the Under-21's fixture, St. George celebrated a solid 3-0 win against their local rivals.

A cracking second half strike by David O'Han was followed by David Hofierka's goal - which many thought should have been disallowed for offside.

Substitute Luke Cairney nabbed the third, in a game that saw goalkeeper Les Bihari - recently purchased from Ryde City - make his debut for the Saints as an over-age player.

The Under-18's finished 1-1, with Mohammed El-Reda scoring for St. George and Matthew Toogood living up to his name to earn a point for the Sharks.

St. George: Allogdellis, Brennan, Sevaras, Watson, Petratos (Verrender 69), Bakis, Augerinos (Kladis 73), Galea, Petrovski, Janic (Maglis 59), Markopoulos.

Sutherland: Olla, Daley (Ristovski 72), Tedesco, Harrod (Karanasos 59), Giraldo (Merralls 69), Paradisis, Salim, Hobbs, Stephen, McDonald, Richardson.

Red Card: McDonald 80 (Sutherland).

Referee: Nick Asargiotis



Gully stay top after Western derby

GREEN GULLY CAVALIERS 2

Svigos 25, Becvinovski 45

ST ALBANS SAINTS 1

Vojtek 57 pen

Sunday night at Green Gully reserve, Kealba.

By Markian Jaworski

Under a fine red sky and a balmy twenty-two degrees celsius, what better way could Melbourne have chosen to host the 'Western Derby' between the Green Gully Cavaliers and the St Albans Saints.

With each team undefeated after the first two rounds of the Victorian Premier League, and both sides occupying the first and third positions on the ladder respectively, the stage was set for a feisty end-to-end football shoot-out.

The Saints had a great early chance through Damir Mouric after the raging bull

like Ivan Zilic treated the Cavalier defence like a china shop, but it was Green Gully who took the first honours.

A floating long ball from Matt Urlovic had St Albans keeper Mario Vunder in a conflict of mind over whether to stay on his line or go. Before Urlovic could decide, George Svigos had popped up to head in the opener for the home team.

St Albans striker Ivo Razov may not be big in stature, but by golly is he big in heart and guts. On the half hour he took the Gully defence head on, only to be upended in the penalty box but referee Bruno Daniello waved play-on.



It was undoubtedly Green Gully's first half, and before long Gully defender Steven Douglas was not only marshalling the back line, but winning the ball, linking up with his midfield and having a long range crack himself.

On forty-five minutes, Green Gully's Steven Mangos made a darting run in the middle of the Saints half, and slotted the ball through to the open

and waiting Sash Becvinovski, who turned on a six-pence and nutmegged the advancing Mario Vunder. Two-nil to the

Cavaliers.

The Saints' Kon Sianidis forced Gully's Robert Brian into a great save from close range, very late in the half, but the scores stayed in favour of the Green Gully Cavaliers.

St Albans started the second half determined to get back into the match.

Obviously spurred on by their coach at the half time break, Sianidis again forced Brian into a save and Damien Vojtek was not far wide from a twenty-five yard free kick.

But it was Razov who broke the Green Gully defence. He chased after the ball, winning a sliding tackle, and then again taking the Gully defence head on, this time he was taken down by Zoran Markovski, and the referee pointed to the spot and also pulled out the first yellow card of the evening.

St Albans' Vojtek pulled one back for the Saints in the 57th minute and both teams came close after that, including a Tony Necesk header off the post for Gully, but more importantly St Alban's couldn't find an

equaliser and Green Gully now sit pretty at the top of the Victorian Premier League, with three wins on the trot.

Green Gully: Brian, Atanasovski, Becvinovski, Donev, Douglas, Georgiadis, Markovski (Spiteri 73), Mangos, Suric, Svigos, Vassallo.

St Albans: Vunder, Hrehoresin, Zilic (Ekici 67), Milardovic (Guze 69), Klazica, Razov, Mouric, Urlovic, Sianidis, Vojtek, Dragicevic.

Yellow: Green Gully Markovski, Donev
St Albans: Guze

Referee: Bruno Daniello

Man of the Match:

3. RAZOV (ST ALBANS)
2. Becvinovski (Green Gully)
1. Sianidis (St Albans)



IAN DOBSON: VPL COACH WITH NSL CREDENTIALS

By Mark Fisher

Ian, you have on your resumé coaching success with Melbourne Knights in the NSL, titles with Altona Magic and one with Green Gully last season. Is there any room left in the trophy cabinet at home for more awards?

I think it (my coaching successes) came from a spell I had as a player where I lost three finals in one month at Preston Having lost the NSL Grand Final, the NSL Championship and the Docherty Cup, I didn't want to ever go through those feelings again. Since then, every grand final I've been in I've managed to succeed in. I won two championships with Altona Magic - one in '95' and one in '97, and one in between with the Melbourne Knights in '96.

And then we just missed out in '98 with Altona Magic as we'd got knocked out on penalties. And fortunately I had success here at Gully in '99.

So that takes us into the new millennium, and I certainly haven't lost my desire to succeed.

Out of all those premierships you won as coach, which was the most satisfying?

Well, they are all different. Obviously when you win the national championship, there is a special feeling associated with that. With the Knights I had taken over mid-way through the season and we were in about sixth or seventh position, and then to go through to the end losing only one or two games.

To then win the national championship was very special.

With Altona the first premiership was more satisfying than the second one, as we had made the finals in 1994, but in 1995 we took out the VPL championship.

And the win with Green Gully was a different circumstance altogether. I came into a situation where the club had been starved of success for sixteen years.

I'd done everything right off the park, and we were quite ready to take the championship out. We thought it would take two years though as part of the building process, and we'd gone through a big turnover in personnel.

We actually clicked just before the half-way stage (of the 1999 season), and we remained unbeaten over the last sixteen games. It was special for everyone in the club, especially for the likes of Club President Charlie Farrugia and Captain Steve Douglas, who had both never won a championship before.



Who was the most outstanding player you have coached, and why do you think so?

Danny Vasilevski, who has just been picked up by Carlton, was in my squad at Altona at the age of sixteen. I think he has a lot of potential and ability.

Although the one that I've actually worked with that immediately comes to mind was a chap called Joe Simunic. Joe wasn't

playing first-team football at the Knights when I took over, and from what I saw they were desperate in the first few weeks for a sweeper.

And Joe had come out of the AIS and hadn't played a first-team game, yet I believe he was the key to everything click-

ing for us. After the championship he didn't play a lot in the following season due to a foot injury, but in the very next year he went overseas.

I'd say that out of all the players I have coached, he's the one who stands out.

Who do you expect will be Gully's toughest competitors during this Premier League season?

The league has been compacted to twelve teams, and I believe those twelve will be better organised and a little bit stronger on the park. I think Fawkner will pick up this year.

Bulleen have recruited heavily and it might take them until half-way through the season to get sorted out. They may leave it a little too late, but then again I might eat my own words! Altona, my old team, look



quite experienced now, and I expect Bentleigh to be pushing us.

So I think those will be the four teams to put pressure on us.

Would you say you have at your disposal a much more strengthened squad compared to that of last season?



We've actually strengthened the forward line with the addition of (Ice) Kutlesovski and (Sasha) Becvinovski, and we have strengthened the midfield, with Henry Velkovski coming in.

I thought Henry would replace Brandon Vassallo, but Brandon decided to return to us from the Knights.

Therefore, on paper we definitely have a stronger midfield as well.

I guess we are weaker defensively, because we lost Colin Azzopardi (to Carlton), who was very valuable in a man-to-man marking role. He is a good youngster with a lot of pace.

And finally, your thoughts on coaching Gully in the NSL 2nd Division from October this year ...

Well, my ambition has always been to coach at the highest level possible, and if the club sees fit to discuss terms at the end of this season when my contract expires I'd be quite happy to do that.

I believe that this club certainly is the best within the Victorian Premier League, and in my role here I have the full support of the President and his Board.

Ian, thanks very much for your time.

Opazo hammers Sharks with hat-trick

Port Melbourne Sharks 1

Pappas 55

Heidelberg 4

Opazo 28, 56, 90 (pen),
Tsoumerkias 81.

By Mark Fisher

Rarely do you see a team with the form credentials of Port Melbourne get absolutely taken apart at home, but that is exactly what happened at Anderson Reserve last Friday night.

In front of about 1,000 spectators, Heidelberg played as though they were back in the NSL with a clinical display all over the park to snatch three points.

The key destroyer was Alfonso Opazo - a tremendous pick-up for Heidelberg during the pre-season. Indeed, the diminutive striker earned himself a hat-trick after ninety minutes of normal time had elapsed.

He, more than any other player, deserved to perform the last rites on the hapless Sharks.

Port Melbourne had some early flourishes of smoothness about them, with Serdar Pir finding space along his right flank to try out the mettle of the 'Berger

defence

But supply to the wingback was slowly cut off as the solid midfielder Cameron Brown came into his own.

Brown showed real authority in the centre, laying off a series of useful passes with impunity and by turning this way and that to draw two or more Port Melbourne players to himself. His counterpart in Peter Tsolakis was not having as much luck, with 'the little general' unable to find team-mates in goal-scoring positions for much of the match.



Heidelberg's determination to take the game to the home side was rewarded when Leigh Tsoumerkias chipped for Cameron Brown, located near the penalty spot.

This should have proved an easy take for Port Melbourne

'keeper Chris Roche, but he made a feeble lunge at it and came down without having made any serious contact with the ball. It then fell nicely for Opazo, who made no mistake slotting home from point-blank range.

After only 28 minutes Heidelberg were in front.

Port Melbourne didn't drop their bundle completely, and showed they were

worthy of an equaliser when Collina broke to the left and crossed to Vukosavljevic at the far post, but all he could manage was a misdirected volley as Mile Medjedovic bore down.

Heidelberg came out after the break eager to finish the job they started midway through the first half.

Cesar Hermosilla went on an unhampered run through the centre and then slipped a precise wide ball to Jim Iliopoulos. Iliopoulos had a split-second to fire past the 'keeper on the right edge of the box but shot into the waiting grasp of Roche instead.

The game could have been won by the 46th minute, if not for Iliopoulos' lack of finishing.

That let-off gave Port their last chance to make a game of it, and they did

equalise before their fortunes completely evaporated.

George Tzirtsis, possibly the best player for the Sharks, delivered a ball out to John Pappas wide of the area, and he had plenty of time to blast diagonally past his namesake.

The Sharks' fans had little time to celebrate the sweet strike as Heidelberg responded with another goal inside the next minute.

After a swift build-up, Iliopoulos received a ball in space to the left of goal and again fired at the goalkeeper, but this time the ball rebounded to Opazo to pop in his second in the 56th minute.

The 50/50 balls were increasingly being won by the Heidelberg midfield, and that helped them to continue to pile on the pressure.

Tsoumerkias furthered the lead by belting home a curling 25-metre free kick into the right side of the net in the 81st minute.



Opazo's penalty completed the rout when it beat Roche inside stoppage time, after substitute Jeff Stefanidis was tripped by Sash Nicolich inside the area.

A tremendous win for Heidelberg, and a night to celebrate as they looked quite at home again in the Victorian Premier League.

PORT MELBOURNE:

Roche, Pir, Papadopoulos, Knezevic, Nicolich, Tsaltas, Tzirtsis, Pappas J, Tsolakis (Dimas), Collina, Vukosavljevic (Sonsini)

HEIDELBERG UNITED:

Pappas N, Iliopoulos (Stefanidis), Hermosilla, Tsoumerkias, Makris, Brown, De Propertis, Tsonis, Opazo, Medjedovic, Oulians

Best Players:

- 3 - OPAZO (HEIDELBERG)
- 2 - Brown (Heidelberg)
- 1 - Hermosilla (Heidelberg)

FIRST GRADE:

OAKLEIGH CANNONS 1

A Andas

ALTONA MAGIC 1

S Markovski

PORT MELBOURNE SHARKS 1

J Pappas

HEIDELBERG UNITED 4

A Opazo 3 L Tsoumerkias

GREEN GULLY CAVALIERS 2

G Svigos, S Becvinovski

ST ALBANS SAINTS 1

Vojtek

FAWKNER BLUES 2

F Tramontana A Sherifovski

BULLEEN ZEBRAS 1

Spink

PRESTON LIONS 1

J Kozic

BENTLEIGH GREENS 0

ALTONA EAST PHOENIX 2

J Dimitrios B Amour

MELBOURNE RAIDERS 1

N Lazarevski

RESERVES:

Oakleigh Cann. 1 Altona Magic 6

Port Melbourne 3 Heidelberg Utd. 1

Green Gully C 1 St Albans Saints 2

Fawkner Blues 4 Bulleen Zebras 2

Preston Lions 0 Bentleigh Green 5

Altona East 2 Melb. Raiders 2

VPL TABLES

FIRST GRADE

GREEN GULLY CAV

3 3 0 0 9 2 9

ALTONA EAST PHOENIX

3 3 0 0 6 2 9

ALTONA MAGIC

3 0 1 0 5 4 5

ST ALBANS SAINTS

3 1 1 1 6 4 4

PRESTON LIONS

3 1 2 0 3 3 4

OAKLEIGH CANNONS

3 1 1 1 4 5 4

BENTLEIGH GREENS

3 1 0 2 3 3 3

BULLEEN ZEBRAS

3 1 0 2 4 6 3

FAWKNER BLUES

3 1 0 2 3 5 3

HEIDELBERG UNITED

3 1 0 2 6 9 3

PORT MELBO SHARKS

3 1 0 3 4 7 3

MELBOURNE RAIDERS

3 0 1 2 3 5 1

RESERVES

PORT MELB. SHARKS

3 3 0 0 9 3 9

ST ALBANS SAINTS

3 2 1 0 7 2 7

BENTLEIGH GREENS

3 2 0 1 12 3 6

ALTONA EAST PHOENIX

3 1 2 0 5 4 5

MELBOURNE RAIDERS

3 1 1 1 10 6 4

GREEN GULLY CAV

3 1 1 1 7 4 4

ALTONA MAGIC

3 1 1 1 7 9 4

PRESTON LIONS

3 1 1 1 5 7 4

FAWKNER BLUES

3 1 0 2 5 10 3

HEIDELBERG UNITED

3 0 2 1 2 4 2

OAKLEIGH CANNONS

3 0 1 2 1 10 1

BULLEEN ZEBRAS

3 0 0 3 4 12 0

TOP GOALSCORERS:

OPAZO(HEID) 3

BECVINOVSKI(GC) 2

COLLINA(PME) 2

LAZAREVSKI(MELR) 2

SPINK(BULZ) 2

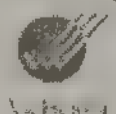
VICTORIAN

PREMIER LEAGUE



eat well

live well



ROUND FOUR

Saturday 26 February

Altona Magic v Green Gully Cavaliers

Paisley Reserve - 8.00(First Grade)/6.00(Reserves)

Sunday 27 February

Bentleigh Greens v Altona East Phoenix - Kingston Heath SC

St Albans Saints v Port Melbourne Sharks - Churchill Reserve

Sunday Games - 6.00(First Grade)/4.00(Reserves)

Monday 28 February

Bulleen Zebras v Preston Lions - Veneto Club

Heidelberg United v Fawkner Blues - Olympic Village

Melbourne Raiders v Oakleigh - Epping Stadium

Monday Games - 8.15(First Grade)/6.15(Reserves)

OZZIE'S VIEW OF THE KIWI KINGZ



On one of the Kingz' recent Australian visits, Levent Osman spoke with Melissa Muscat about the Kingz crowds, team spirit and THAT travelling.

Mel: Lev, when you first signed for the Kingz, did you have any expectations and were they met?

Lev: I didn't really know enough about the club as I had come straight from trials in Germany with a club called Hanover. Obviously the Kingz are still learning as it is their debut season but they are improving everyday.

Mel: Has the move from Melbourne made any difference to your career?

Lev: The club is very professional. The coaches are very experienced, both coming from Europe. An experience in itself is that I am the youngest player in the team, I'm almost 23.

The Kiwis are very friendly like Aussies, although they're not used to Europeans. We're learning from them and they're learning from us.

Mel: In your opinion, what do you think could be done to improve crowd figures?

Lev: Firstly, I think the club needs to employ a marketing manager. Generally there is not enough research on the league. There are approximately 50,000 children who play in the area and that says more than anything.

That would be your prime target, players attending schools every week and promoting the club. Giving out free tickers which is a chain reaction to getting the mums and dads to the games.

I also think that the club should maybe look at how Perth and Northern Spirit go about business because in their (Kingz) inaugural season they still have a lot to learn.

Mel: What is the team spirit like in the Kingz camp?

Lev: The team spirit right now is excellent and I think it has contributed to our improved results. If you look at the start of the season our results were pretty average and our actual performance lacked a bit of consistency.

It took the Aussies a few months to understand our Kiwi team mates and to

understand the Kiwi mentality (?). I think the Aussies brought in the experience to the team, but the Kiwis showed us that they can match it and that they're there to really make something out of this and not just to make up the numbers in the league. I think now the team has banded well, although the Aussie boys still cop some flack in New Zealand.

Mel: What has the travelling been like? Do you think the long distance affects your game?

Lev: Travelling with the Kingz has been quite an experience. At first, I thought travelling on the day of the game (a 3-hour flight) was ridiculous and if there was anyone complaining it was probably the Aussie boys.

For the Kiwis, it was new so it didn't really matter to them. It showed later that it was just a mind game. The first time we travelled on the day of the game was against Sydney Olympic and we won.

We played really well that game. That then set up our season of travel. Our results away have been great. We hardly go a day early now, we only travel a day early if the trip is more than five hours. I really don't think the travelling has been a problem at all.

I think the Kiwi boys are really enjoying it. They look forward to the flack the Aussies give them. They find it quite amusing and very motivating (?).

Mel: And finally Lev, is there any Marcus Stergiopoulos gossip which you can share with the readers of Inside Soccer? (We already know that he doesn't wear his partner's underwear during a match as they are too small!)

Lev: Gossip on Sterg eh? Well, Sterg and I best buddies here and I don't want to get myself into any trouble. As you know, Sterg loves his clothes and his look so some of the Kiwi boys call him Mr Labels.

Mel: Well, thank you very much for your time and co-operation Lev and good luck to you, and the rest of the Kingz boys for the remainder of the season.

Don't mess with a missionary man

By Robert Szoszkiewicz

In many cases a coach of any sporting team can be considered a father figure amongst the players. They advise, listen, teach and sometimes even preach to their chargers while preparing them for the challenges that lie ahead.

Kosciusko Soccer Club, which competes in the NSW State League Division Five competition, has the ultimate father at its helm.

Their coach, Richard Gamanski, typifies the fatherhood stature within a Club.

Gamanski is actually a Catholic Priest and due to his immense passion for the round ball game, steps away from the altar to take up his post as a coach.

A priest for nearly 30 years, Father Richard, as he is mostly referred to, has been involved with soccer for even longer.

"I began playing soccer in my native Poland over 45 years ago," he said.

"During my playing days, I played for a number of clubs in Poland, before arriving in Australia in the late 1960s. In 1970 I played for Polonia Sydney (NSW State League Division One) before moving to Melbourne where I played out my career with Polonia Melbourne (State League Division One) between 1971 to 1974," he added.

Since retiring as a player, Father Richard has continued being active taking up various coaching roles.

"I was associated with the Polish National Team during the 1974 and 1978 World Cup campaigns in Germany and Argentina", he said.

"I also assisted at a number of First Division clubs in Poland, Argentina and Croatia plus English premier league giants Arsenal and Chelsea amongst others".

In 1998 he attended a coaching course in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

His success has also spilled over into Australia where he coached Polonia Melbourne's senior and junior teams.

"In 1975 and 1976, we were Victoria's number one under 15s and

16s teams" Father Richard said.

He has not only focussed his knowledge on local club players while in Australia.

"Former Soccerroo stars Charlie Yankos and Alan Davidson both played in my teams during their early days", he explained.

For the past three years, Father Richard has been back in Sydney coaching the Kosciusko Soccer Club at Plumpton in Sydney's West.

"I am back where I started in Australia, although the club has changed somewhat."

After so many years in soccer, Father Richard explained enjoyment motivates him.

"It is the best sport and I think I can help, I still enjoy it".

And there are still some goals left, he added. "To produce many good players and good people".

At Kosciusko, Father Richard's professional attitude has been instrumental in the club's progression.

Manager Adam Ostrowski explains that Father Richard is an ideal ingredient for success. "Father Richard's experience has certainly given the club a much needed lift. His 'never give up' comment to the players typifies the type of person he is".

For now, Kosciusko aims to carry on the Polonia Sydney tradition, which unfortunately dissolved in 1993 after over 40 years.

Kosciusko, formed in 1996, have re-commenced its climb in the NSW State League Division five competition.

It will be no easy road to emulate some of the feats achieved by Polonia, as Kosciusko prepares its quest towards the summit of NSW soccer.

But a grand final appearance last year is definitely a step in the right direction.

For the time being, Father Richard is busy preparing Kosciusko for the upcoming annual four team pre-season tournament hosted by the club at Chopin Park on 27 February.

This will be the last hit out before the season proper commences the following week.

Midland Brick Night Series Upcoming Fixtures

**All games to be played at
E & D Litis Stadium (WA)**

Friday 18 Feb

Ashfield/Bunbury v Inglewood United 6.45pm
Perth SC v ECU Joondalup 8.15pm

Sunday 20 Feb

Floreat Athena v Cockburn City 6.15pm
Fremantle City v Sorrento 8.00pm

Friday 25 Feb

Swan I.C. v Bayswater City 6.45pm
Western Knights v Sorrento 8.15pm



The Four Diegos

with Ajax's Olyroo Jason Culina



On guest of the week we have an Aussie lad destined to be one of our greatest ever players. He played for Sydney Olympic last year and now he wears the colours of the famous Ajax Amsterdam. It's skilful Young Socceroo and Olyroo midfielder, Jason Culina ...

Diegos: "Most Aussies associate Holland with tulips, clogs, dykes and funny smelling tobacco but, to the soccer enthusiast, the Netherlands is home to Ajax Amsterdam, one of the most decorated soccer teams in the world and a club that you now call home."



"Most Aussie youngsters only dream about such a move. Have you come down to earth yet?"

Culina: "One of my dreams when I was a young player was to play for Ajax one day. It's hard to believe that I'm actually now living my dream."

"Initially, I spent the first several months becoming familiar with the country and adjusting to the fact that all the Ajax big name players, who I used to watch on TV, were now my colleagues."

"Now, seven months later, it all seems normal to me."

Diegos: "Your father, Sydney Olympic coach, Branko Culina, has said that he is so proud of what you have achieved that he feels like packing up, leaving Australia and coming over to support you in your quest for international stardom."

"What are the support structures like at Ajax for young recruits like yourself and how do you feel about dad coming over to hang out with you and your Dutch mates at movies, discos, etc?"

Culina: "First of all, the support offered by Ajax has been terrific. Young players are treated very well here."

"When I first arrived, I was told that I could be accommodated with a guest family but I declined the offer as I am here living with my girlfriend, but the support was certainly appreciated."

"My dad, as you know, has offered much support as well. It is good of him to offer to come over but everything is going so well here and, at this stage, he doesn't really need to make the trip."

Diegos: "Foreigners, when talking about Amsterdam, rave about the funny tasting cookies, the welcoming nightlife and the famed football academy at Ajax."

"What is the set up like at the club and what aspects of their program can be introduced into the Australian system of youth development?"

Culina: "All of it. It is brilliant here. When I first arrived, I was amazed with the stadium."

"They also have junior facilities which include their own stadium as well as 15 change rooms for each junior team; each junior team also has a pool of their own, a spa, synthetic grass fields."

"The first team facilities are just unbelievable."

"Yesterday, we had a training session that included a spa and sauna. I didn't know we had those things until yesterday."

"Differences in training are huge. We engage in activity that is much more technical than in Australia."

"There are a number of training strategies that I have been introduced to here which I have never seen before."

"Ajax is famous for their videos that illustrate these training techniques. My dad has viewed a few and he plans to introduce some of them to his own team preparation at Olympic."

Diegos: "You endured a lot of uncertainty over your transfer overseas with the original planned move to Brondby stymied by the non attendance to a medical check up during the World Youth Cup in Nigeria."

"But you went from chocolates to boiled lollies to after dinner mints when Ajax finally came in for you."

"It must have been a frustrating time?"

Culina: "It was very frustrating at the start. My dream was to play overseas and so I wanted to take anything that became available. In the end, it worked out for the best."

"I'm happy where I am. There were a couple of clubs I could have gone to before Ajax and, as it turned out, I couldn't be happier with this club."

Diegos: "You are a member of Australia's Olympic soccer squad, the Olyroos. There is no question about the talent in the team squad but the 3-0 shelling by South Korea in the recent tournament in Adelaide has had a sobering effect."

"There have been question marks over the lack of preparation."

"Are you confident that the team will have the cohesion necessary to win a

medal come September?"

Culina: "I am definitely confident. All the players are eager to do well. The preparation could be better though."

"We could be playing more games but it's hard to get a team together when there are so many great players who are all over the world."

"Between Australia and Europe, it's not easy getting together. However, we do have a couple of games coming up in March as well as a camp in June and hopefully that will be enough for us to do our best at the Olympics."

Diegos: "Can you tell us what the Ajax fans are like?"

Culina: "The fans don't know me yet. I first need to prove myself to the crowd if I expect them to support me."

"The more experienced players are treated very well by the Ajax fans. At the moment, Ajax is not doing too well in the league. They have a few problems and are looking to replace the coach."

"The fans are very demanding, as all fans in Europe are. We usually have an average turnout of approximately 45,000 to 50,000 fanatical fans a game."

Diegos: "In the tradition of great soccer feuds such as Romario and Edmundo; Stan Collymore and John Gregory; Paul Gascoigne and Glen Hoddle, you and Ajax's other Aussie recruit, Joe Didulica seem to be living out your own spiteful feud at present."

"Apparently, it's not over a girl or family but over who is the better cook."

"Set the record straight, who is the better cook?"



Jason Culina playing for Ajax. "Differences in training are huge. We engage in activity that is much more technical than Australia."

Culina: "He claims he is but, at training today, we came up with a solution. I told Joe that I would be diplomatic and tell you Diegos that he was the better cook. He did the same for me during one of his interviews, so I thought it would be the least I could do for him."

Diegos: "Thanks Jason. Stay clear of those funny tasting cookies. Adios Amigo."

Culina: "Thanks Diegos. In that case I better stop Joe cooking. Adios Diegos."



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A selection of Aussies
abroad and the best of
Australia

"Compulsory listening for Melbourne's sports
public," says Inside Soccer editor Aidan Ormond

Farina's final Chile game

Australia drew with 1-1 with Bulgaria, in its final round match of the Four Nation Soccer Tournament played in Valparaiso, Chile.

The Socceroos took the lead within the first minute of the game, Paul Agostino latching onto a Pablo Cardozo cross and volleying the ball into the back of the net.

Australia continued to dominate the match with Agostino, Cardozo and Steve Corica all having shots saved, before Bulgaria drew back the equaliser just two minutes from full time.

While obviously disappointed with the final outcome, coach Frank Farina (pictured) is optimistic about the continued progress of his team.

"Once again I felt we deserved to win the game, and it's a difficult result to swallow because we dominated for so long and were ahead for so much of it, but by the same token, we didn't score the second goal," he said after the match.

"We went really close, with Paul Agostino having two attempts cleared off the line, as well as a number of other chances, so we had our opportunities to wrap the match up.



"It's always dangerous at 1-0, it's really disappointing to lose it right at the death, but in the end you have to score goals to win games.

"Still, overall I'm very happy with the way the team has developed through this tournament, we've gotten better with each game and have always looked promising.

"Playing three games in seven days is always difficult, but I've had the opportunity to look at a variety of different players in different positions, I've felt we've gone from strength to strength, and we'll continue to improve."

LG SOCCEROOS TEAM LINE-UP

Mark Schwarzer, Jason van Blerk, Stephen Laybutt, Shaun Murphy, Luke Casserly, Danny Tiatto, Craig

Foster (capt), Steve Corica (Matt Horsley 74'), Brad Maloney, Pablo Cardozo (David Zdrilic 60'), Paul Agostino (Scott Chipperfield 76')

Goals: Paul Agostino 1'

Yellow Cards:

Steve Corica 15', Jason van Blerk 25', Stephen Laybutt 57'

Venue: Valparaiso, Chile

Fed Cup starts with a bang

By Nick Guoth

The opening match of the 2000 WIN TV Federation Cup was made as part of a big Open Day for Bruce Stadium and the AIS set up for an insight into the upcoming Olympics.

The game, between last year's Championship winner Monaro and Gungahlin Juventus was set to be a fiery encounter, and that it proved with five goals and two send-offs.

Juventus finished the winner in a quite entertaining match where both sides played the second half with only ten men.

The scoreline of 4-1 slightly flattered the winners, but with the format of the Cup competition this year, every goal counts.

The withdrawal of O'Connor Knights has meant that only 12 teams are now participating.

After a committee meeting by Soccer Canberra, it was decided that the winners from each group and the best second overall will proceed to the semi-finals.

Thus the importance for Monaro to not finish on the end of a big scoreline.

It is now vital that they win both of the other two matches in their group, against Belconnen United and the Australian National University, and hope results in other groups go their way.

The game opened slowly with only two chances, one each, but neither of which were to offer the opposing goalkeepers any serious worry. More importantly, Juventus goalkeeper Tony Giannasca was at his best and anything sent his way was well taken care off.

The first real opportunity to open the scoring happened with a half an hour done.

A long through ball was contested by Steve Lazzari and fell to George Cattanach with only the keeper to beat, but his chip went wide.

Then three minutes later John Rakic made a silly tackle in the middle of the field thus warranting a caution, which together with another earlier in the match meant an early shower for the Monaro midfielder.

Five minutes before the end of the half Monaro's Danny Macor put Matthew Cachia through and only a solid save from Giannasca kept Cachia from giving his side the early lead.

A few more minutes on and a lapse in defence saw Juventus go ahead. A free kick from some 35m out was taken well by Martin Lazzari. The ball found the only target of importance, Martin's brother Steve, who glanced his header easily past Ian Jeffries.

Juventus coach Ian Heywood

told his players that they just need to keep at it and that they should not give the referee a reason to even up the numbers, but unfortunately young Matt Valeri was not listening and only one minute in, he lashed out at his opponent after a foul and made contact.

There was no hesitation by the referee to see him leave the field.

Then only four minutes into the second period and Juventus had doubled the scoreline, and through a rather bizarre way.

A ball that went too far rolled towards Jefferies. His attempted clearance rebounded off the back-side of Cattanach and bounced into the goal.

The goal deflated Monaro, and now it was important for them to push forward to try and reduce the scoreline, but in doing so they had to not allow more in at the other end.

They held out well, generating a chance for Simeonov and showing solid defence through Bruno Monterosso, but with numbers a challenge by Steve Lazzari fell to Cattanach just outside the box and his shot gave Jefferies no chance.

Yet only two minutes later Monaro hit back.

Danny Macor made a very long run down the right and slid a ball in behind the defence for Simeonov to poke past Giannasca. And two more minutes on they should have scored again.

Cachia pulled a ball back from the goal line to the far post, but Simeonov could only head the ball into the post.

With a quarter of an hour left a delicate chip from Steve Lazzari found John Glass running through and his finishing was superb bending the ball around the keeper.

The game petered out with the players feeling the effects of the stifling heat allowing Juventus to savor a solid victory in their Cup campaign.

Heywood said after the game "I though we competed and battled very well. We were able to close their influential players down."

Heywood was also all praise for Tony Giannasca for making a number of crucial saves.

For Monaro Jimmy Bland was not happy about some aspects of the game, especially in how his defence conceded the first goal. He said "the second goal killed us off and we had to go with three up front. The scoreline didn't reflect the game".

Bland added "this is something we have to take back to the drawing board and look at before the next game".

NSL TOP SCORERS:

PABLO CARDOZO

(Sydney Olympic) 13

MICHAEL CURCIJA

(South) 13

CON BOUTSIANIS (PG)

12

PAUL FOSTER (BS)

11

ALEX MOREIRA (C)

11

CROWD COMPARISON:

Cumulative to Round 22

99/00: 908,935

98/99: 880,136

Fixture changes:

*Please note that the Marconi Stallions and Perth Glory game in Sydney will be played on Good Friday April 21 kick-off 6pm (in place of the original Easter Saturday)

* R23 South v Marconi on Feb 27 will start at 5pm

* R25 Carlton and Strikers is now on Sunday March 12 at 7pm

* R27 South v Strikers on March 26 starts at 5pm.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"As far as I'm concerned, he can go eat a meat pie!"

Spirit Chairman Remo Nogarotto gives some diet advice to PFA's Brendan Schwab.

"No, because he's a F...ing fruit cake!" One NSL player after being asked if he understood the assistant coach's pre-match motivational speech.

"That's bullshit ... I've had player troubles everywhere because I am the coach and I put pressure on the players." Bernd Stange on rumours of player discontent at Glory.

"And just from a purely objective point of view, I look at how they've played over the season and they're not worth f...ing 10% of what they are getting paid, if what I hear is right."

John Kosmina to AAP on Spirit players.

"I don't know. There's probably more democracy in Castro's Cuba than there is at the PFA."

Remo Nogarotto on how Brendan Schwab is elected at the PFA.

"Married life is great too, it's not as dramatic or different as I thought it would be ... except Tania's put the foot down, and there are these funny little horns growing out of her head ... no, really, she's my best mate, and it's helped no end having her here with me."

Danny Milosevic's analysis of married life with Tania.



Countdown to Mori's Millennium: two to go!

Mori's goal tally: 135

The record: 137

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE - ROUND TWENTY THREE

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS v GIPPSLAND FALCONS

- 1 Bob Catlin
- 2 Shane Pryce
- 3 Andrew Roberts
- 4 Adam Sanderson
- 5 Todd McManus
- 6 Glenn Sprod
- 7 Travis Dodd
- 8 Mark Wilson
- 9 Chris Tancheski
- 10 John Buonavoglia
- 11 Luke Tomich
- 12 Robert Angievski
- 13 Brad Wiecezorek
- 14 Greg Owens
- 15 Joshua Ferguson
- 16 Vasko Trpceviski
- 17 Paul Wheeler
- 18 Andrew Harper
- 19 Chad Mansley
- 20 Bradley Swancott
- 21 Peter Juchniewicz
- 22 Glen Moore
- 23 Damien Smith



- 1 Bojo Jevdjovic
- 2 Dean Fak
- 3 Manny Gotis
- 4 Mehmed Durakovic
- 5 Jeff Hopkins
- 6 Brian MacNichol
- 7 Andy Vargas
- 8 Clayton Bell
- 9 Robbie Pucca
- 10 Sandy Robertson
- 11 John Hutchinson
- 12 Peter Kakos
- 13 Adrian Savage
- 14 Doug Marcina
- 15 Jonathon Buhugiar
- 16 Juan Nilo
- 18 Michael Katz
- 19 Igor Mandic
- 20 Simon Miotto
- 21 Ben Cassar



Venue: Breakers Stadium - Friday 25 February 2000 7.30PM
 Head to Head: Played 15 Breakers wins: 3 Falcons wins: 7 Draws 5
 Last Week: Breakers 0-1 away win over Kingz
 Falcons 0-1 home loss to South Melbourne

CARLTON v ADELAIDE CITY FORCE

- 1 Dean Anastasiadis
- 2 Dave McPherson
- 3 Craig Deans
- 4 Simon Colosimo
- 5 Sean Douglas
- 6 Andrew Marth
- 7 Stuart Slater
- 8 Mark Atkinson
- 9 Alex Moreira
- 10 Lubo Lapsansky
- 11 Archie Thompson
- 12 Mike Conroy
- 13 Steve Martin
- 14 John Markovaki
- 15 Con Anthopoulos
- 16 David Terminello
- 17 Joe Tricarico
- 18 David Della Rocca
- 19 Serdar Pir
- 20 Adrian Cagaj
- 21 Andrew Packer
- 22 Angelo Motsiopoulos
- 23 Colin Azzopardi
- 24 Joshua Kennedy



- 1 Vilson Knezevic
- 2 Ivan Zelic
- 3 Alex Tobin
- 4 Carlo Talladira
- 5 Damian Mori
- 6 Carl Veart
- 7 Nick Sabljak
- 8 Aurelio Vidmar
- 9 Nathan Day
- 10 John Fusco
- 11 Michael Cartwright
- 12 Louis Brain
- 13 Matthew Kemp
- 14 Angelo Costanzo
- 15 Bradley Hassell
- 16 Dong Ki Kim
- 17 Atilio Hornjik
- 18 Jonathan Lihou



Venue: Olympic Park - Saturday 26 February 2000 7.00PM
 Head to Head: Played 5 Carlton wins: 2 Force wins: 1 Draws 1
 Last Week: Carlton 3-0 away loss to Knights
 Force 1-2 home loss to Glory

WOLLONGONG WOLVES v FOOTBALL KINGZ

- 1 Leslie Pogliacomì
- 2 George Souris
- 3 Alvin Ceccoli
- 4 Robert Stanton
- 5 David Cervinski
- 6 Matthew Horsley
- 7 Paul Reid
- 8 Anthony Surjan
- 9 Sasho Dimoski
- 10 Stuart Young
- 11 Scott Chipperfield
- 12 Neil Harlock
- 13 Noel Spencer
- 14 Saso Petrovski
- 15 David Huxley
- 16 Peter Lahanas
- 17 Esala Masi
- 18 Chad Bishop
- 19 Paul Dimech
- 20 Daniel Berlframe
- 21 Christian Zelvis



- 1 Michael Utting
- 2 Che Bunce
- 3 Riki Van Steeden
- 4 Fabio Macolino
- 5 Jonathon Perry
- 6 Marcus Stergiopoulos
- 7 Wynton Rufer
- 8 Chris Jackson
- 9 Fred de Jong
- 10 Dino Mennillo
- 11 Robbie Middleby
- 12 Harry Ngata
- 13 Levent Osman
- 14 Batrum Suri
- 15 Ivan Vicolich
- 16 Lee Jones
- 17 Mark Elrick
- 18 Stuart Riddle
- 19 Leigh Kenyon
- 20 Jason Batty
- 21 David Moya
- 22 Aaron Silva
- 23 Simon Eaddy
- 24 Ross Nicholson



Venue: Brandon Park - Sunday 27 Feb 2000 6.30PM
 Head to Head: Played 2 Wolves wins: 1 Kingz wins: 0 Draws 1
 Last week: Wolves 1-1 home draw with Olympic
 Kingz 0-1 home loss to Breakers

PERTH GLORY v CANBERRA COSMOS

- 1 Tom Tomich
- 2 Robert Trajkovski
- 3 Jamie Harnwell
- 4 Vinko Buljubasic
- 5 Gareth Naven
- 6 Scott Miller
- 7 Troy Halpin
- 8 Alistair Edwards
- 9 Bobby Despotoski
- 10 Kasey Wehrman
- 11 Peter Buljan
- 12 James Afkos
- 13 Dion Valle
- 14 Edgar Junior
- 15 Can Boutasianis
- 16 Vas Kalogeracos
- 17 Hamilton Thorp
- 18 John Carbone
- 19 Tony Franken
- 20 Ivan Ergic
- 21 Ljubo Milicevic
- 22 Jason Petkovic
- 23 Aaron Cole
- 24 Gary Faria



- 2 David Millin
- 3 Toplica Popovich
- 4 Danny Burt
- 5 Nicholas Purdue
- 6 Jason Polak
- 7 David Winnie
- 8 Daniel Watkins
- 9 Alex Castro
- 10 Michael Musitano
- 11 David Arranz
- 12 Brian Hamilton
- 13 Harry James
- 14 Glen Kolpak
- 15 Ilija Prenzovski
- 16 Robbie Hooker
- 17 Nikola Mrdja
- 18 Geoff Howarth
- 19 Grant Barlow
- 20 Scott Conlon
- 21 Elliot Zwangobani
- 22 Andrew Clark
- 23 PJ Roberts
- 24 Ivo De Jesus
- 25 Gabriel Gonzalez
- 26 Angelo Konstantinou



Venue: Perth Oval - Sunday 27 February 2000 4.00PM
 Head to Head: Played 8 Glory: 4 Cosmos wins: 2 Draws 2
 Last week: Glory 1-2 away win over Force
 Cosmos 1-0 home win over Power

SOUTH MELBOURNE v MARCONI STALLIONS

- 1 Milan Udvaracz
- 2 Steve Iosifidis
- 3 Fausto de Amicis
- 4 Nick Orlic
- 5 Con Blatsis
- 6 David Clarkson
- 7 Steve Panopoulos
- 8 Vaughan Coveny
- 9 Paul Trimboli
- 10 Michael Curcija
- 11 John Anastasiadis
- 12 Richie Alagich
- 13 Adrian Cuzzupe
- 14 Anthony Magnacca
- 15 Goran Lozanovski
- 16 George Goutzoulis
- 17 Jim Tsekini
- 18 Robert Liparoti
- 19 Tasos Psonis
- 20 Chris Jones
- 21 Rade Culbirk
- 22 Mustafa Mustafa
- 23 Chris Roche
- 24 Andy Vlahos



- 1 Michael Turnbull
- 2 Chad Gibson
- 3 Mark Babic
- 4 Dominic Longo
- 5 Pan-Kaun Kim
- 6 Christian Carr
- 7 Darren McDonald
- 8 Zeljko Babic
- 9 Brad Maloney
- 10 Mike Smith
- 11 Danny Invincible
- 12 Buddy Farah
- 13 Pierluigi di Gia
- 14 Alex Duric
- 15 Francis Awaritefe
- 16 Harry Karl
- 17 Brendan Renaud
- 18 David Aceski
- 19 Paolo Marchesini
- 20 Kris Trajanovski
- 21 Vlado Zoric
- 22 Josala Junior Sauturaga
- 23 Daniel Severino



Venue: Bob Jane Stadium - Sunday 27 February 2000 5.00PM
 Head to Head: Played 45 South wins: 16 Stallions wins: 20 Draws 9
 Last week: South 0-1 away win over Falcons
 Stallions 2-0 home win over Sydney United
REPLAYED SUNDAY 27 FEBRUARY 8.30 PM
C7 SPORT CHANNEL 12

SYDNEY UNITED v MELBOURNE KNIGHTS

- 1 John Crawley
- 2 Ray Younis
- 3 Mark Racker
- 4 Velimir Kupresak
- 5 Eddie Bosnar
- 6 Vince Savocca
- 7 Mirko Jurilj
- 8 Nahuel Arrarte
- 9 Mario Jermen
- 10 Ante Moric
- 11 Tom Pondeljak
- 12 Tom Maric
- 13 Matthew Zec
- 14 Kain Rastall
- 15 Aytec Genc
- 16 Joe Moric
- 17 Nick Bosevski
- 18 Steve Bozinovski
- 19 Greg Saric
- 20 Steve Tolios
- 21 Zvonko Uslebrka
- 22 Colin Luff
- 23 Terry Palapanis
- 24 Andy Rakic
- 25 Ante Deak
- 30 Brett Hughes



- 2 Joey Rayher
- 3 Ivan Jolic
- 4 Ante Kovacevic
- 5 Jason Vukadin
- 6 John Didulica
- 7 Mark Bille
- 8 Dragi Nasteviski
- 9 Ivan Kalic
- 10 Paul Urlovic
- 11 Mijo Trupkovic
- 12 Murtala Toyin Abbas
- 13 Lance Plunkett
- 14 Paul Magdic
- 15 Ransford Banini
- 16 Alex Kriatzoglou
- 17 Brandon Vassalo
- 18 Roddy Vargas
- 19 Zlatko Maglic
- 20 Martin John
- 21 Zeljko Susa
- 22 Steven Tillinger
- 23 Michael Reda
- 24 Hrvoje Matkovic
- 25 Adrian Cervinski
- 26 Marko Prskalo



Venue: Sydney United Sports Centre - Sunday 27 February 2000 6.00PM
 Head to Head: Played 29 United wins: 8 Knights wins: 12 Draws 9
 Last Week: United 2-0 away loss to Stallions
 Knights 3-0 home win over Carlton

LIVE FRIDAY 25 FEBRUARY 7.30
C7 SPORT CHANNEL 12

**PARRAMATTA POWER V
 BRISBANE STRIKERS**



- POWER**
- 1 Andrew Crews
 - 2 David Barrett
 - 3 Michael Santalab
 - 4 Steve Eagleton
 - 5 Richard Plesa
 - 6 Joe Vrkic
 - 7 Jacob Burns
 - 8 Walter Ardone
 - 9 Mile Sterjovski (below)
 - 10 Joel Griffiths
 - 11 Steve Berry
 - 12 Stephen Laybutt
 - 13 Milan Blagojevic
 - 14 John Angelucci
 - 15 Danny Townsend
 - 16 Mark Byrnes
 - 17 Danny Kukucka
 - 18 Lachlan Campbell
 - 19 Matt Thompson
 - 20 Barney Smith
 - 21 Ahmed Elrich
 - 23 John Gibson
 - 27
 - 28 Peter Bennett
 - 29
 - 30 Mike Gibson

- STRIKERS**
- 1 Clint Bolton
 - 2 Glenn Gwynne
 - 3 Shane Stefanutto
 - 4 Andrew Davidson
 - 5 Matthew Bell
 - 6 Brad Dutton
 - 7 Shane Smeltz
 - 8 David Pilic
 - 9 Paul Foster
 - 10 Wayne Sroog
 - 11 Chay Hews
 - 12 Peter Dwyer
 - 13 Stuart McClaren
 - 14 Jade North
 - 15 Mark Battistin
 - 16 Peter Grierson
 - 17 Jeremy Harris
 - 18 Nick Meredith
 - 19 Wade Baldwin
 - 20 Daniel Duke

LIVE SUNDAY 27 FEBRUARY 6.30
C7 SPORT CHANNEL 12

**SYDNEY OLYMPIC
 V NORTHERN SPIRIT**



- OLYMPIC**
- 1 Jim Kourtis
 - 2 Scott Thomas
 - 3 Chris Zoricich
 - 4 Peter Tsekenis
 - 5 Scott Baillie
 - 6 Ante Juric (below)
 - 7 Zlatko Arambasic
 - 8 Marcus Phillips
 - 9 Pablo Cardozo
 - 10 Brett Emerton
 - 11 Chris Kalantzis
 - 12 Sebastian Sinozic
 - 13
 - 14 Gabriel Mendez
 - 15 Lindsay Wilson
 - 16
 - 17 Paul Kohler
 - 18 John Kyriazopoulos
 - 19 Nick Carle
 - 20 George Bouhoutsos
 - 21 Lee Miot
 - 22 Pete Zorbas
 - 23 Dylan Macallister
 - 24 Norman Tome
 - 25 Hussain Jomaa
 - 26 Adam Ciantar
 - 30 John Karoubas

- SPIRIT**
- 1 John Perosh
 - 2 Robert Enes
 - 3 Matthew Langdon
 - 4 Matthew Bingley
 - 5 Mark Rudan
 - 6 Luke Casserley
 - 7 Robbie Slater
 - 8 Tony Perinich
 - 9 David Seal
 - 10 Nicola Berti
 - 11 Troy Cranney
 - 12 Simon Catanzaro
 - 13 Philip Moss
 - 14 Shane Lyons
 - 15 Anthony Faria
 - 17 Paul Bilokapic
 - 18 Paul Wearne
 - 19 Graham Arnold
 - 20 Jess Van Stratten
 - 21 Michael Cunico
 - 22 Paul Henderson
 - 23 Adam Snyder
 - 24 Elvis Olic
 - 25 Ryan Griffiths
 - 26 Jack Sobczyk
 - 27 Adam Griffiths
 - 28 Abbas Saad
 - 30 Sean Cranney
 - 31 Michael Prentice



Venue: Parramatta Stadium
Friday 25 February 7.30PM

Head-to-Head: 1
Power: 0
Strikers: 1
Draws: 0

Last Week: Power 1-0 away loss to Cosmos
 Strikers 1-0 away loss to Spirit



Venue: Belmore Sports Ground
Sunday 27 February 6.30PM

Head to Head: 3
Olympic: 2
Spirit: 1
Draws: 0

Last Week: Olympic 1-1 away draw with Wolves
 Spirit 1-0 home win over Strikers



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